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SOCIAL INSIGHT
IN
CASE SITUATIONS

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SOCIAL INSIGHT IN CASE SITUATIONS

BY

ADA ELIOT SHEFFIELD

AUTHOR OF "THE SOCIAL CASE HISTORY,"
"CASE STUDY POSSIBILITIES"



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To
A. D. S.

PREFACE

My first impetus to write this book came from a series of meetings held by a group of social workers. The purpose of these meetings was to formulate the group experience in helping individuals and families so as to make it "humanly" and socially instructive. One sequel to the meetings was the forming of a Research Bureau, as director of which I undertook to help realize this doubtless ambitious aim. My own experiences—as case worker in two family welfare societies, as probation officer, as member of a Public Welfare Commission, and as participant in many board and staff-committee discussions—had disposed me to stress the *patterning* of need-aspects in each case and had perhaps inclined me to look for a way of envisaging their interactivities. The interplay among aspects of health, income, personal attitudes and family relationships, school and recreational opportunities, housing conditions, and so on composes a social subject matter that merits special formulating. So complex a body of factual material, however, must be brought into an order compassable for thought. A dynamic unit of thinking was required. This unit I find in the "need-situation," which increasingly evidences itself as the trained worker's real unit of service. As such it invites an application in the social field of concepts from the *Gestalt* school of psychology.

With the need-situation as its unit of special concern, case work will move more confidently toward its destiny as a social institution. The worker's function becomes that of an educator within an experience curriculum in which persons, arrangements, and influences are mobilized for cooperative growth. Her objective is eventually to

withdraw, leaving her "client-group" implemented to continue bettering their jointly conditioned standards and practices.

I wish to express my appreciation of the interest of Mr. Charles M. Rogerson, Secretary of the Permanent Charity Fund, in the production of this book, and my indebtedness to the agencies and staff members who contributed illustrative matter, as well as to the many case workers who for years past have allowed me a share in their discussions.

To the editors of *Social Forces* I am indebted for permission to make use of material that I have previously published in that journal, namely:

"Reflective By-Products of a Social Treatment Interview" (in collaboration with Helen L. Myrick, May, 1925);

"Conditioning Patterns in the Family Circle" (June, 1930);

"The 'Situation' as the Unit of Family Case Study" (June, 1931).

Acknowledgments are also due to the following authors and publishers for their courtesy in allowing the use of quotations: to Miss Rose Green, Professor G. W. Hartmann, Dr. S. W. Hartwell, Professor Edna Heidbreder, Professor W. E. Hocking, Professor Elton Mayo; and to D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., Columbia University Press, Coward-McCann, Inc., Henry Holt and Company, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Macmillan Company, and the Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene.

ADA ELIOT SHEFFIELD.

Cambridge, Mass.

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SOCIAL INSIGHT
IN
CASE SITUATIONS

CHAPTER I

HOW CASE WORK PRESENTS ITSELF

The term "case work," as used among social agencies, stands for the effort to meet the needs of families or of individuals caught in life-situations which, without some outside help, threaten to become disastrous. The word implies that each need-situation is considered and met as presenting a separate problem, or "case." Usually this sort of help is given by special agencies—Family Welfare societies, medical social departments of Hospitals or Dispensaries, the more progressive relief organizations, child-placing agencies, the better departments of probation and parole. In different parts of the United States and among the "case-work" agencies of any one part, this aim of "individualized" service is realized with widely varying degrees of satisfactoriness. Though "standards of case-work," often referred to by social workers, have for years been rising, this has taken place in some agencies and in some localities faster than in others. The advance, broadly speaking, has been in the direction of getting clearer understandings of the complexities of need that come to attention, and of developing treatment methods that help clients and kin to meet them out of growing capacities for self-direction.

Our best approach as students of this important field of social effort is to read two or three case records, summarized in a way to display what is going on in modern

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city communities in the handling of need situations by professionally trained helpers. Of course the reader will ask at once how *characteristic* these cases are, how generally one would find case work carried on at the level of performance here presented? In answer it should be said (1) that the level of such work anywhere varies inevitably with three major conditions: the institutional resources that are available, the load of work which the agency is carrying, and the agency's "philosophy"—the social purposes it is carrying out; (2) that the examples here offered all represent favoring conditions as to the available resources and the current load; and that they display the philosophy that usually obtains. By way of introducing us to case work as the student is likely to meet it, these records while they miss "psychiatric" insight do show widely prevailing ideas of good practice carried out more fully than is possible to many agencies where the community means and the pressure of demands oblige them to compromise with their own standards. It is of course the ideas, the social assumptions and purposes to which agencies are giving effect that make case work socially momentous, so that we shall inspect the following records with special attention to the agency's conception in each case of what it was trying to do.

For a sampling of this work we will look at records from three types of need situation: one involving the provision of aid in a chronic illness, another involving the retraining of a problem child, and the third involving the rehabilitation of a family in adversity. As here displayed the records have been recast in a form that registers, in each case, the units of advance in terms of which we may *think*, and not merely sense, the intended process. It shows

successive points of rest in the on-going flow of happenings, each marking the fulfilment or frustration of purpose on the part of worker, client, and other persons involved. By italicizing the phrases which signalize these units we shall have running guides to the whole treatment process.

Case A. Social Provision for Chronic Illness

Situation 1

The physician in charge at a General Hospital asked their Social Service Department to arrange after-care for a woman recovering from amputation of leg following diabetic gangrene. The patient, Miss Ann Horan, was a cook in well-to-do families, was highly regarded by employers and employment agencies, and had been supported while in the hospital by a former mistress, Mrs. Drexel. A thrifty woman, she had been the main support of her parents in their later years, and had many warm friends.

The circumstances: Miss Horan was expecting on her recovery to return to a widowed sister with whom she had been living some years. The two women, both past middle life, had between them maintained a small flat. Although the sister was more or less of an invalid, Miss Horan expressed entire confidence that when she got an artificial leg the two would be self-supporting.

The problem: The patient's social needs seemingly provided for, the sole problem was to devise ways and means of after-care for a respectable elderly cripple.

The agency's action: The social service got Miss Horan admitted into a private Chronic Hospital, where she would continue under the care of the same physician as before. The understanding was that she should remain for six months to a year, so that she might come out able to use an artificial leg, which the General Hospital would provide.

The situation as met: Since the Chronic Hospital also had

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a social service, the corresponding department of the General Hospital withdrew from responsibility, having met the need-situation by assuring skilled care of a cripple for a return to the community.

Situation 2 (a Year Later)

The changed circumstances: By the end of a year Miss Horan's situation had changed both medically and socially. The doctors now believed that although her diabetic condition was liable to grow worse abruptly, and gangrene might develop in her other leg, she would for the present be able to walk when she became adjusted to an artificial leg. She was already getting about on crutches, and they advised her discharge.

Other considerations that may have been regarded by the Chronic Hospital as a part of the situation were that Miss Horan's care was expensive (at least \$25 a week), that pressure to receive new and urgent cases was constantly upon them, and that Miss Horan herself, whose friends brought her sweets, was a demoralizing influence upon the ward through breaking her diabetic diet.

On the social side her situation had altered for the worse. The widowed sister had become a hopeless invalid and had left the flat and gone to stay with an old friend, Mrs. Campbell. While Miss Horan continued to talk of supporting herself with her sister as before her illness, clearer sighted friends recognized that the home she had counted on returning to was gone.

The problem: To find or arrange *extra-mural care with continuing medico-social interest for an elderly homeless cripple.*

The agency's action: Naturally the first persons to be turned to would be the patient's other relatives, a half-sister, nephew and nieces. But to this Miss Horan was deeply averse. She preferred and believed that her friends, especially Mrs. Drexel, would help her. The agency, accordingly, turned to these resources.

Developments: This hope, as quickly became evident, was ill-founded. Her personal friends were either living-out girls or women (like Mrs. Campbell) of modest means whose utmost generosity could not suffice for an invalid's probable needs; and Mrs. Drexel felt that she had already done all she ought in view of other demands upon her—even though Miss Horan might have to end in the Almshouse.

Further agency action: What with these difficulties in the way of finding suitable arrangements for Miss Horan, and the hope that when she had learned to use an artificial leg her friends could more easily arrange for her care, the Chronic Hospital kept the patient for a second year. An additional influence entered here. Some public questioning had been going on as to the proportion of free patients cared for under the terms of the hospital's charter, and its authorities had become almost overscrupulous in holding non-paying inmates until they no longer needed institutional care.

Developments: The situation might almost be said to have come to a standstill. The hospital could not see just how to take what it believed to be the next step, namely, to discharge the patient; while the patient, after the rather sudden death of her sister, showed a lessening of her previous confidence and desire to care for herself. She now wanted to remain in the hospital. When approached to discuss plans for living outside, she persisted in dismissing the subject, and in the judgment of the social worker had become "institutionalized."

Further agency action: Once Miss Horan had got adjusted to her artificial leg, however, the hospital authorities felt they could delay no longer. As a way out of the *impasse* the social service of the General Hospital was asked to reassume responsibility for the patient and to arrange for discharge. This the General Hospital agreed to do.

Summary of developments: The Chronic Hospital had brought the patient to a less helpless condition. Medically, though her prognosis was highly uncertain, she was able to live outside a hospital; socially she was without the special resources required by a possibly progressive helplessness. The social service, having been frustrated in its own purpose of

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placing the patient in the community, transferred the responsibility to another agency.

Situation 3 (after a Second Year)

The circumstances: The situation confronting the General Hospital social service differed from that which the Chronic Hospital had faced a year previous in that the patient could now walk again, that her sister was dead, and that she no longer wished to leave hospital care. Her other relatives had not as yet been approached. This step Miss Horan had all along opposed, even to the point of tears—giving as reasons that her family must realize that she had scant savings without being told, since she had supported the parents for years; that she felt more claim on friends for whom she had done things; that when the nephew and nieces were small it had always been she who had money; and that her family had very little to spare anyway. Her attitude was perhaps affected also by the fact that she and her own sister had had less education than the other branch of the family.

The problem: To secure for a *progressively helpless cripple an outside environment that should include comfortable housing, with medico-social interest, friendly companionship, and financial support* for such a period as she had to live.

The agency's action: The General Hospital assigned to Miss Horan's care the same worker, a Miss Blanchard, who had known her two years previous and who had her confidence to start with. Miss Blanchard at once persuaded the patient to a cheery cooperation in planning life in a furnished room near her friends where she could do her own cooking according to dietetic orders. Since Miss Horan's friends lived within easy taxi reach of the General Hospital, this plan assured comfortable housing, companionship, and a continuing medico-social interest.

Miss Blanchard went over the whole plan with Miss Horan's friends, thus encouraging them to call frequently, and

also asked the members of a near-by settlement house to drop in on her from time to time. In order to realize the patient's desire for self-support and at the same time diversify her interests the visitor secured home sewing for her from an Occupational Therapy Association. This ambition for self-support met with disappointment, since the patient proved too slow and unskilled a seamstress to earn more than \$1 00 a week. The Occupational Therapy Association continued to give her work somewhat under protest, since their function was to provide occupation for its therapeutic value, and this patient could never get well. They suggested a sewing society as more appropriate.

Daily comfort, companionship, varied occupation, as well as regular clinic attendance having been arranged, the question of income became urgent. The patient's money supply was low, and it was increasingly clear that she must lose her second leg. Miss Blanchard therefore insisted on seeing her relatives.

Developments: The nephew and his wife, although they had little acquaintance with the patient, recognized a responsibility. They undertook to provide \$15.00 a week, Miss Horan's full support, which they thought the relatives would raise among them. This large undertaking on the part of a man of modest means with children to bring up was made in view of the expectation that his aunt might not live through the second amputation now arranged for. The operation proved successful, however, and the patient was ready for discharge from the Ward in three weeks. Throughout this ordeal she was patient and usually cheerful, joking with doctors and nurses in spite of pain. Two days after the operation she exclaimed, "Oh, it is good to be alive."

Further agency action: Since it was still expected that her life would be short, this naturally influenced the plans of the social service. Although the doctors had advised a convalescent home, Miss Horan begged to return to her lodging room, and was so embarrassed at the prospect of having strangers see her condition, that the social service felt her desire should be granted. She was therefore returned to her furnished room,

where she could do her own cooking, three weeks after losing her second leg.

Summary of developments: In a short time the patient, established in a comfortable room with friends about her and within reach of the hospital, had rallied well and by means of a wheeled chair was taking almost the entire care of herself. The sewing she could do contributed to her mental health, even though it amounted to little as a source of income. Her support was carried by her nephew, the expectation still being that she had not long to live.

The situation had become one of *extra-mural care for a moribund cripple*.

Situation 4 (Three Months Later)

By the end of two or three months it had become evident that the patient was likely to live much longer than had been supposed probable. This altered the situation with regard to her support and to certain attitudes toward helping her. The nephew could not take her into his home and could not carry the burden through any prolonged period, especially as it developed that his mother, who was largely supported by her daughter, felt it an injustice that she should help. It seems that when his mother was struggling to bring up this daughter and her other children, Miss Horan had not assisted them. The Visitors to the Sick ¹ also, who had offered to take entire care of the patient, found they could not do so much as this when it promised to be a matter of months or perhaps years. The medico-social relation must take on a longer span.

The problem: To secure prolonged *extra-mural care for a dependent chronic cripple*.

The agency's action: The General Hospital Social Service asked the Family Society to become responsible for the patient's care and to organize a pension for her. The Family Society found Miss Horan with unabated courage and ambition. De-

¹ An organization of lady volunteers who visit and assist patients in the General Hospital.

spite the fact that each morning her landlady had to assist her to sit up and get started, she was eager to do for herself. Once in her wheel chair she did everything except make her bed and clean her room. She looked forward to getting about with two artificial legs, and proposed to keep her muscles fit by creeping around her room on her stumps.

The District Conference of the Family Society approved of raising a pension for Miss Horan, rather than returning her to institutional care. Those to whom the Society turned for the money, however, did not all share this view. The private Relief Association believed that so helpless and needy a patient should be persuaded to enter the Almshouse. Nevertheless, this agency agreed to assist until a pension should have been raised.

The sum of money to be got together was \$14.00 per week. Towards this amount the nephew promised \$5.00 per week, the Public Relief Department \$4.00 a week, the Cecilian Guild and Sisters of the Sacred Heart ² \$13.00 a month, and the Visitors to the Sick eggs and cream to the value of \$2.00 a week.

Developments: Worried though Miss Horan still felt at the prospect of her nephew's making a sacrifice to help her, she found a source of contentment in the certainty and regularity of this organized income. She at once planned to buy provisions in larger quantity so as to economize. From now on Miss Horan's time was filled with friendliness and happy interests. Her clergyman brought consolation by weekly visits and pleased her with compliments on her well-kept room. The District Secretary of the Family Society called with her pension each week, Miss Blanchard kept up a contact with her, settlement workers and her old friends dropped in frequently. Even the taxi-driver, interested through taking her to and from the hospital clinic, had her at his house to dinner, persuaded the Visitors to the Sick to supply her with weekly pleasure drives and led one of his regular "fares" to present her at Christmas with radio parts. The taxi-driver himself set up the radio, which proved a delightful resource to her. Her last days thus

² Organizations connected with the Roman Catholic Church.

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passed in happiness until her death, about nine months after her second amputation.

The reader of this record may feel that the social assumptions which it displays really go without saying. Given a sick and destitute woman, we expect a humane and prosperous community to do things for her. As students of society, however, we cannot stop with any answer so simple. Things which are "nice to do" for people, taken individually, may have uncalculated consequences when done repeatedly, for many people, and over periods of time. It ceases to go without saying what we are assuming as answers to the questions: "*How much* should be done?" "For what *type* of case?" "By which agencies?" "With what outlay on resources?" Bearing in mind, then, that social work treats not just Miss Horan, but the "Miss Horans" of society, let us examine the ideas which seem to actuate the treatment of this case. They are the following—

(1) *That an acute need is a first claim on the philanthropies of the community.* In any community there are many people who would profit by philanthropic help of one kind or another. There are men and women needing better-adapted jobs, families muddling along on inadequate budgets, parents bungling their relations to their children and to each other, promising boys and girls needing opportunities, tired and run-down workers needing rest. It is thinkable that our social agencies—especially the private ones—should make their first concern not individual need but social waste—the wasted serviceability of persons capable of usefulness but temporarily handicapped. The record of Miss Horan, however, shows the agencies accepting without question the claim on their time and resources of a

person who could make no social return. Their treatment questionings were to decide not *whether* she should be helped but *which* of the available organizations could help her best. At each phase of her case they sought to match the need-factors in her situation with the service-resources of a locality well-equipped with the requisite institutions. The claim of Miss Horan on the community may be displayed in a tabular view of needs and ministrations; thus—

| <i>Need claims</i> | <i>Ministering resources</i> |
|---|---|
| Surgical operation | General Hospital |
| After-care under medical supervision | { General Hospital Social Service seeks it |
| | { Chronic Hospital gives it |
| Placement in the community with after-care, both medical and social | { Chronic Hospital Social Service seeks it |
| | { General Hospital Social Service gives it |
| Home work | Occupational Therapy Association |
| Financial support | General Hospital Social Service secures it first from relatives and former employer, then through Family Agency, which raises it from |
| | (1) a Relief Association |
| | (2) the Public Relief Department |
| | (3) two Church organizations |
| | (4) Visitors to the Sick |
| | { District Secretary of Family Agency |
| Companionship | { Clergyman from parish church |
| | { Workers from neighborhood settlement |
| | { Personal friends |

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After the Family Society had assumed responsibility for providing care in a boarding home, this agency's main task was the marshalling of social resources, both personal and organizational, so that each might contribute its appropriate part toward the material support and the happiness of the patient. It will be noticed that by getting money allowances from her family and from a Church society, and by enlisting the special interest of her clergyman to call on her, they made choices calculated to strengthen the bond between the patient, and her family and church. They also "cooperated" with the General Hospital and its social service visitor for continuing medical guidance. In short, they exercised a leadership in correlating the special sorts of interest in this case felt by her church, her family, and by various medical and social organizations.

Such concern to make the most fitting selection from among several possible sources of help, in order that this patient be not only comfortable, but *happy*, indicates the completeness with which everyone who touched the case took it for granted that all urgent needs should be met.

(2) *That good case work means intensive personal attention from the worker to the client and his interests.* As we have seen, time and thought were given by several social workers not merely to help Miss Horan get and keep in as good physical condition as possible, but also to help her to shape a contented life. For instance, the workers from both the Chronic and General Hospital were not only scrupulous in awaiting the patient's permission to consult her nephew, but gave time to reasoning with her distress at this suggestion—in Miss Blanchard's case again and again. Miss Jones of the Chronic Hospital social service escorted the invalid to call on her sick sister and afterwards went so far as to her-

self attend the sister's funeral. Miss Blanchard of the General Hospital not only took pains to secure for the patient a special wheel chair of a size to go through the bath-room door, and to see that its cushion was renewed—attentions to comfort—she also sent flowers after the second operation and encouraged the patient's nephew to do the same—attentions to Miss Horan's happiness through the expression of personal sympathy. This same devoted worker helped stimulate Miss Horan's old friendships and brought her new friends from the settlement house, thus widening her social contacts, and in addition called frequently herself as a friend even after responsibility for the invalid's care had been turned over from the General Hospital to the Family Society.

(3) *That a client of respectable behavior and refined habits should receive especially favorable treatment.* One notes this assumption in the charters of old funds left "for the worthy poor," "for needy gentlewomen," for "those who have seen better days." Administrators of relief funds sometimes feel that within reasonable bounds recipients of aid who have had a good standard of living should be helped to maintain it. Although this attitude may be colored by a regard for the symbols of achieved status in a country where caste is not fixed, the most important element entering into it is probably the feeling that such cases give more promise of a favorable outcome. And if, in addition to the client's standards, other factors in a need-situation give a prospect that its reshaping may not only be successful but quick—that the need will prove "temporary"—the inclination to assist is likely to be strong. Privately financed agencies, for instance, may construe their function in the community as that of caring for more "promising" cases, and

may hold that upon tax-supported organizations should rest the responsibility for clients of less intelligence and character whose situations appear likely to continue long unimproved. Social workers, board directors, and donors, all find it stimulating to see results from their efforts, and to see them within not too long a period.

In Miss Horan's case, when it was expected that after-care of six months or so would make this self-respecting and bright-minded woman independent of assistance, she was sent to a well-equipped, and (for its pay patients) expensive private hospital. Later, when it became evident that she could not recover self-maintenance, an agency would ordinarily have sent a woman thus without resources to the city Almshouse. The saving in money would have been considerable. Her care at the Chronic Hospital was at least \$25 as against \$14 a week in the public infirmary; and although her room and board in the community came to only \$14 a week, there were overhead costs to be added. Yet the social workers continued to spend time on her: in finding a suitable room, in giving medical and social guidance and in raising her pension and keeping it going regularly—time moreover, that might have been employed for clients whose needs promised a more hopeful outcome. Apparently they felt that Miss Horan's character and refinement entitled her first, to the more selected companionship which the Chronic Hospital afforded, and, later, to the varied interests among congenial friends which she found by living in a furnished room. So respectable a client deserved some outlay just to make her happy.

(4) *That in seeking help for the client an agency should turn first to the client's relatives.* This assumption has been almost a principle of case work, the reasons given for it

being, first, that mutual aid between relatives is a social obligation, and second that it makes for family solidarity. Where the responsibility assumed is between parents and children, and perhaps even between grandparents and children, little dissent to this opinion would ordinarily arise. Differences of view do arise, however, as to the claims on collateral kin, especially when the affectional ties are not close. With mobility of population, greater freedom of women, increasing interests outside the home, even brothers and sisters may nowadays drift away from each other. When this is the case, it is not surprising to find a client feeling, as did Miss Horan, that she had more claim on her friends than on her family.

That her feeling was not shared by the social worker is clear from the latter's repeated attempts to get the patient's permission to talk with relatives, and from her final approach to them. Yet these relatives were only a half-sister, with her children a generation further removed, and none of them "close" to the patient. When one remembers that the half-niece was supporting her parents, and that the half-nephew was a man of modest means with a wife and children, Case A appears a rather striking instance of the assumption of claim upon relatives. The sharing of this assumption by the half-nephew and his wife is even more striking. These two people made a substantial sacrifice to help keep a half-aunt with whom they were not intimate and who deeply objected to receiving their assistance, from going to the Almshouse. Their motivating impulse, if one may venture to guess, may have been a familial self-respect, springing from a sense of identification with the family group.

(5) *That people of means and leisure should give out of*

their abundance in these respects for the service of those less fortunate. One might say that the larger part of the help or guidance given in this and in the two following cases depends upon this assumption. In Miss Horan's case all the money represented in the assistance she received, with the exception of the \$4 a week contributed to her pension by the Public Welfare Board, came from voluntary gifts of the better-to-do. The endowments on which the General and Chronic Hospital depend, the cost of their buildings, their social service departments, the Family Society, the Occupational Therapy Association, the Benevolent and private Relief Societies, with their funds, offices, and staffs, all were built up and maintained from this same source. Moreover, the Boards of Directors and Committee members, who carry the ultimate responsibility for the management of this body of organizations, are selected in large part from this economic and social level. In the case of the Visitors to the Sick and the Cecilian Guild, the lady members themselves performed the services that in more formal societies are delegated to staff members. Not only is it taken for granted that money and service will be forthcoming year after year; there is a steady pressure toward increasing this self-taxation to meet familiar needs more adequately and to reach out toward new needs as they become recognized. The giving of surplus means and leisure is quite widely assumed as an obligation by the donors and volunteers themselves as well as by the agencies.

Looking at community trends over a period of years, it appears that as provision for any need becomes accepted as mandatory, it tends to be taken over as a governmental responsibility. The relief of hunger and cold in the home, the

care of the sick in City and State Hospitals, notably those for the insane and the tuberculous, public playgrounds, the care of dependent mothers and children, of the aged—these or any other fields of welfare work, when felt as necessities by the general public, may become tax-supported instead of privately financed undertakings. Sometimes the latter mode of support may first have served to demonstrate the need in question, or to try out a method of care now applied on a larger scale.

Case B. Parent-Child Behavior Problem

Situation 1

A hospital social service department asked the private child-placing agency of their city to meet the need-situation of a tired mother, Mrs. Kenny, and her children. The two older boys, thirteen and seven in age, had been in the hospital ward many months with chorea; the girl of eleven, though healthy and mentally normal, was nervously upset from faulty home training; and the mother was worn with anxiety. A boy of three was well, though not vigorous.

The circumstances: The Kenny family were living in a small but fairly comfortable house near the outskirts of a rapidly growing city. A small shopping district was within easy reach. Mrs. Kenny was described by a cousin as a mother who had given up everything for her children, having, for instance, bought hardly any new clothes for herself since her marriage. She was now apparently too run-down to maintain an orderly home or to do much cooking, and spent her limited energy in a constant worrying over the children, with occasional fits of anger. She kept up ceaseless "don'ts" with them, visited those at the hospital so frequently that she could see no improvement. A psychiatric examination showed her as a case of "anxiety neurosis." To lift her mind out of its rut of worry she had the consolation of her church, which she attended regularly, and

the friendship of an elderly cousin with whom she and her husband were on affectionate terms. Otherwise she seldom left home and for much of the time was housed with the cares that were too much for her strength.

Mr. Kenny, an emotionally stable man, had earned a moderate regular wage in the same unskilled position for many years. He had always left plan-making to his wife, to whom he turned over his money regularly. He was slightly lame. Despite the father's stability Mrs. Kenny and the children kept each other in a state of irritation. The girl, Elizabeth, and her mother did not "understand" each other. She was angered by promises the mother did not keep, and by the latter's indirect methods of handling the children. Physically more vigorous than her brothers, she put up an active opposition to nagging, and was disobedient and tempersome. Then when her mother showed favoritism toward the more tractable children, she became deeply resentful and began to treat home as a place to escape from. She had been spending her evenings on the street. It was a mother-daughter relation which, devoid of mutual confidence, was verging toward outright antagonism.

The problem: *To help the mother get rested as a step toward bettering her attitudes toward her children; and to further building up the children's health both physically and nervously.*

The agency's action: The children's agency and the hospital social service were agreed that the three older children should be placed in foster-homes for the summer vacation period. The parents wished this for the two older of them and undertook to pay something toward their board.

(1) For John a country home was found not far from the lake-front where there were older boys, and where he could have bathing and sailing. In this home he was happy and improved markedly in health. After some weeks, however, the man in the home refused to keep him because he bothered the animals—chased chickens, for instance. The visitor thought this merely a city boy's ignorance. She then transferred him

to another home where he could begin school, the parents desiring extended placement. This place he disliked. The boys at school fought him and called him names. When his mother visited him he cried so hard she feared for his health and insisted on his coming home. Though in talking with the agency visitor, Miss Bell, she claimed to appreciate the consequences of shielding children from the ordinary experience of life, actually she appeared to be governed by a dread of seeing them suffer, and perhaps too by a desire to keep them near her.

(2) Foster-placing of the second boy Thomas for a few weeks was also advised by the doctors. His chorea had returned on his going home from the hospital, and might, it was feared, become chronic. Mrs. Kenny complained of her inability to make the child rest. "I tell him not to do things, but off he goes and does them." At the same time the mother could not bring herself to let Thomas leave, nor was she willing to take the fortnight in the country which was urged for herself. Thomas, she felt sure, would be unhappy in a foster-home, and she herself would lose ground with so young a child away. The boy therefore continued in her care, with the visitor offering suggestions that resulted in some improvement—although his dentistry was neglected because Mrs. Kenny shrank from subjecting him to pain.

(3) For the girl a home was found with a Mrs. Flaherty, whose husband, much older than herself, did part-time work at a tree nursery (See Situation 2). Though immediately on Elizabeth's leaving, Mrs. Kenny's health began to improve, even by the end of the summer the latter did not feel equal to having the girl return. All concerned, therefore, agreed that the girl had best continue in her foster-home for a year.

Summary of developments: The need-situation had been partially met by securing the mother of these children a rest from the care of the two older. The boys were all being supervised as to home hygiene, and had improved in health. Elizabeth in her foster-home was growing steadily in self-control. Mrs. Kenny's attitude, however, was still that of the clinging maternal worry of an intra-mural housewife.

*Situation 2 (a "Sub-Situation"; Girl's Adjustments
Gained in the Foster-Home)*

The circumstances: At the time the decision was made for the placing of Elizabeth in a foster-home, she and her mother were seeing their relationship from opposite points of view. Mrs. Kenny wanted her daughter to be obedient and amiable. Elizabeth wanted her mother to keep an orderly home, to stop nagging and indirection, and above all to show the same affection for her as for her brothers. Neither knew how to get the other to act as she wished, except by nagging on one side, rudeness and temper tantrums on the other. The mother was discouraged and irritated, and Elizabeth was in a state of jealous resentment. With her father Elizabeth was on the best of terms.

Two promising elements in this girl situation were her healthy energy and her varied interests. She enjoyed gymnasium, was eager to take dancing and singing lessons, sewed with a group of girls, played parcheesi with her father evenings, and loved any contact with little children. Her mother said of her that she was always nice with them, especially with her youngest brother.

The problem: To shape for this girl *experience patterns unprovocative of jealousy, and educative as to the self-control and manners* that bring a satisfying regard from other people.

The agency's action: As soon as the decision was reached to place Elizabeth for the summer, the girl was taken to a physician to be examined. This led to a tantrum in his office, which passed off at once when she was left to herself. The doctor found her in excellent condition, developing fast, recommended plenty of sleep. The agency then placed Elizabeth in a family of about the same economic status as her own, who were living in a near-by town. The foster mother, Mrs. Flaherty, had brought up her own children successfully and had a daughter of Elizabeth's age. She was also caring for her

motherless niece, an older girl of docile temperament. The Flaherty family, like the Kennys, were Roman Catholics.

Developments: Mrs. Flaherty said that Elizabeth talked and sometimes cried in her sleep, bit her nails. She quickly found her to be "boy-crazy." The girl picked up acquaintance with chance boys and used vulgar expressions in accosting them. The foster mother told her boys would think cheaply of her, and sent her to her room to ask God's forgiveness. Her reproofs met with growing and apparently understanding response from Elizabeth. In addition she asked the girl's teacher and principal to be on the lookout. The teacher, who was young, dropped her idea of "sitting on" Elizabeth, at the foster mother's advice, and instead picked her out to do a favor for her. Elizabeth was pleased and did well in school after that. Mrs. Flaherty herself did not scold much, and when an emotional upheaval threatened would divert the girl by giving her tasks to do. This had a quieting effect. Though Elizabeth was sometimes rude, especially at first, she never once had a tantrum. Mrs. Flaherty taught her to come into the house when disagreements occurred among her companions, and in this way she learned control and was better liked. Gradually she came to use the forms of politeness—"please," "thank you," "excuse me." Mrs. Flaherty's daughters and niece became her friends, and the neighboring little children grew fond of her. Mrs. Flaherty also was gradually getting her to see that the dislike toward her mother which she expressed was a wrong feeling. The foster mother was careful never to break a promise.

Further agency action: The agency's visitor, Miss Bell, in frequent talks and correspondence with Mrs. Flaherty, urged (1) that Elizabeth be trained to merit the pleasures she received, (2) that she be prepared to help her mother when she returned home, and (3) that she be led toward an increasing affection for her family. These ends were to be realized (1) by requiring her to earn the money for gymnasium, and making singing lessons depend upon her general conduct; (2) by giving her home duties with instruction in cooking and sewing; and (3) by having her exchange visits with her family, correspond with her mother, and make Christmas presents for

her brothers. Miss Bell also supplied Mrs. Flaherty with social hygiene pamphlets.

Developments: Elizabeth had many interests in her life at Mrs. Flaherty's. She attended a playground regularly, learned to crochet, sang in a special school chorus, joined in home singing. She had a pleasing contralto voice. In all the home pleasures, Mrs. Flaherty was careful to treat Elizabeth the same as her own daughter. She gave them a Christmas party, and made equally pretty dresses for the two girls. Since she had excellent taste, Elizabeth greatly enjoyed her clothes.

Further agency action: Elizabeth was doing so well that her parents wished her to remain with Mrs. Flaherty for a whole year. With more time to plan for, Miss Bell looked into the possibilities for securing her some group interest. Finally the Girl Scouts agreed to start a troop if Miss Bell would secure a leader and if a request came from the girls. With considerable effort the visitor got a troop started; Elizabeth became interested, passed the test, and spent a happy summer week at the Scout Camp. She wrote Miss Bell a letter of appreciation.

Developments: Though Elizabeth's interest in boys naturally continued, she gained steadily in a sense for social conventions. She reported to Mrs. Flaherty that when a passing boy made an unseemly remark to her, she put her fingers in her ears and walked off silently with her head high. She had remarked on the happiness of a young married couple next door, and had also noticed with surprise the expressions of affection among members of the foster family. She disliked kissing her own mother, she said.

Further agency action: Miss Bell suggested that the foster mother use the happiness of these neighbors with their child to point out to Elizabeth the contrast between a maturing, "socialized" sex interest and a crude egoistic sex interest. When Miss Bell took her to a physician for a health check-up she acknowledged masturbation, learned from playmates. (She dropped the habit at once, however, when Mrs. Flaherty made clear to her that she must tell of it in confession as a "mortal sin.") At the advice of the clinic Miss Bell had Elizabeth's eyes

examined and dentistry attended to. She gave her an attractive child's book on health. As a part of her continuing encouragement of affection between Elizabeth and her family, Miss Bell suggested to Mrs. Kenny that she do little things for Elizabeth from time to time so that the girl might not feel neglected.

Developments: The cousin paid for singing lessons which Elizabeth took with Mrs. Flaherty's daughter; Mrs. Kenny sent yarn for her crocheting. At Christmas time Elizabeth was touched by her mother's efforts to give her as attractive gifts as she made the boys. Her attitude toward her mother became more kindly and the two exchanged frequent letters. Elizabeth's family began to show signs of pride in her. Mr. Kenny, whom Mrs. Flaherty invited for a day's visit, remarked to the foster mother, "Is it not too bad Elizabeth and her mother can't understand each other? Elizabeth is the life of the home." A little later, Mrs. Kenny, on a similar visit, said she hardly knew her own daughter. She expressed surprise that "her hair is so pretty bobbed." Mrs. Kenny got glimmerings of insight into child problems from the foster mother. Nevertheless, whenever Elizabeth went home for a visit, Mrs. Flaherty reported that she dropped into her old habits of rudeness for a few days after returning. Miss Bell leaving to be married, the children's agency appointed Miss Currie in her place.

Summary of developments: So appreciative were Elizabeth's family of her gain in Mrs. Flaherty's home that her stay extended through a second and into a third year. The girl was acquiring emotional stability and coming to understand the accepted social conditionings of the sex interest. She was absorbed in many interests, was doing well at school and with her singing lessons. Her attitude toward her mother and brothers was more tolerant and affectionate. Although Mrs. Flaherty still had to exercise tact with the girl, she was proud of her success. Elizabeth was moving away from a habit of meeting—or anticipating—wounds to her self-esteem by more or less aggressive anger, and was learning how to satisfy her own self claims in consonance with the claims of other people. She was experiencing the happiness of merited approval.

Situation 3 (Continuing Sub-Situation, Beginning in the Third Year of Placement)

After showing herself a girl with distinct promise, it came as a surprise that Elizabeth dropped back into using rough language and showing the old jealous, begrudging attitude toward others in the household. Yet she continued to share the pleasures and duties of Mrs. Flaherty's younger daughter, and was doing well in her various outside activities. For several hours each week she was giving satisfaction as nursemaid for a neighboring baby, which was delicate and required special attentions. In spite of some discouragement at the girl's relapse in manners and language, the foster mother was fond of Elizabeth and wanted to keep her, while Elizabeth on her side showed both liking and respect for Mrs. Flaherty and her family. It seemed sufficiently evident, however, from Elizabeth's behavior that the girl had needs which were not being met in this excellent home.

Problem: *To get at the sources of Elizabeth's emotional relapse.*

The agency's action: Miss Currie (the second visitor) went over the situation with Elizabeth, including her earlier conduct at home. It appeared from this talk that she had supposed she had been placed out solely because of her mother's poor health. When the facts were put before her she sobbed deeply and kept saying "but I don't do that now."

Miss Currie falling sick, Miss Clarke was appointed visitor. Mrs. Flaherty was confident she could "conquer" Elizabeth, saying she had never yet allowed the girl to get the best of her. After a little time Elizabeth grew more polite, and more gentle in her talk, and Mrs. Flaherty again felt encouraged. Nevertheless the agency began to think that Elizabeth might do better under less repression. Calling at the foster home, Miss Clarke noted that there was now another girl with Mrs. Flaherty, placed there by the same children's agency. This girl, an Italian, was pretty, dainty, assured, and inclined to laugh at Eliza-

beth, who though athletic, was awkward. Also Mrs. Flaherty held the newcomer up as an example of attractive accomplishment. Before the two girls the foster mother told Miss Clarke that Elizabeth thought herself too stout, and wanted a corselet. Mrs. Flaherty had told her that "no good woman wears such things." Elizabeth grew red, hung her head, and when the other girl looked amused, began to cry. The visitor suggested letting her try a corselet to learn its discomfort, but Mrs. Flaherty dismissed the idea with the answer that she had never let Elizabeth have her own way in a dispute.

In short, Elizabeth's emotional relapse seemed to represent a pattern of experience similar to that in which her difficulties had originated. She was again in a situation which, first, was provocative of jealous resentments. Another young person, ostensibly on an equality with herself, was winning an approval which she did not know how to command. Second, just as her mother was constantly saying "don't" to a girl of eleven, so the foster mother was holding her at nearly fourteen to the same obedience as was fitting three years previous. The visitor therefore decided that this foster home was no longer favorable to her further development. Mrs. Flaherty, at first upset at the idea of Elizabeth's going, soon became interested. The parents insisted on her return home, and Miss Clarke escorted the girl to their house, where she was warmly welcomed by her whole family.

With Elizabeth back in her home it became important that the old frictions should not reappear. The girl was in excellent health, and her mother was better and therefore less irritable. For a time, following a fire in the cellar of their house, neighbors had dropped in frequently, with a marked effect upon Mrs. Kenny's cheer, her health, and the orderliness of her home, but on the whole she was still home-bound, without recreation or sociability and still given to nervous anxieties over the boys. Her gains in insight and self-control were not enough to give the agency confidence as to the future of Elizabeth in her companionship. The parents, however, were very ready that the agency should continue its interest, and invited the visitor to call frequently.

As in Case A, so again in the case of this girl, we note the assumption that good case work means intensive personal attention to the client. Here, although the more intimate personal relation came naturally to be that between the foster mother and Elizabeth, the workers one after another followed closely the details of the girl's training, and her experience in the boarding home. They guided and encouraged Mrs. Flaherty. On the mind of the first visitor lay the planning of varied educative interests to engage the energies of a healthy, active girl; she it was who got a Scout troupe started in order that Elizabeth might have the pleasure and the discipline of group membership. She also saw that the girl's eyes were examined and her teeth cared for, and took her to a physician for checking up. Only a very intelligent mother and one not too hard-pressed with cares could do for a daughter what this agency was undertaking to do for Elizabeth.

Other ideas, characteristic of present-day work for children, appear in this case and call for remark:

(1) *That the social stake in a child-to-mother maladjustment warrants concern with it on the part of a social agency.* The situation in the Kenny family was not one of acute need, as the term is ordinarily used. Mr. Kenny had held the same steady position for years, and his wages, though moderate, were sufficient for comfortable support. Indeed, he was able to pay part of his daughter's board at Mrs. Flaherty's. Moreover, both parents and their near relatives were law-abiding citizens, faithful to their church, conscientiously concerned for the well-being of the four children. Yet with these elements of family stability, a lack of mutual confidence and respect was apparent between Mrs. Kenny and Elizabeth that was breeding a mischievous so-

cial infection. The girl's jealousies and her tantrums were seriously fatiguing to an entire home group where the mother had neither the nervous vigor to cope with nor the understanding resourcefulness to forestall them. Thirty years ago this perhaps would not have been seen as a situation into which any organized institution except the church should enter, and even the church would perhaps have heeded its personal rather than its social consequences. Today it is recognized that a maladjustment between parent and child breeds attitudes whose ultimate influence radiates out so far beyond the one family circle as to concern the public.

(2) *That the social stake in "pre-delinquency" warrants agencies in concerning themselves with situations not yet flagrant enough for court action, but heading that way.* A serious aspect of jealousy—the outer expression of which is often rudeness—and of uncontrolled temper is that they tend to make a boy or girl at odds and unacceptable in any group, and may interfere with long continuance in friendships. This in turn may breed in a young person an insensitiveness to the group standards of well-conducted people, especially—in the case of girls—to their sex conventions. Casual and temporary friendships with men make a minimum demand on a girl's adaptability. Elizabeth at eleven years old, spending her evenings on the corner with boys, was becoming initiated into the easiest way of compensating herself for what she felt as nagging and snubs in her family group, or for ill-success in any other social group. In addition, she was taking on a street-learned sophistication and speech such as initiates wrong-doing in others—the consequences of which she was too young to more than partially understand.

The social stake in pre-delinquency is then no different in kind from that in delinquency. Case work agencies that take cognizance of the early stages of misbehavior as they appear in this sort of maladjusted situation are adding extra-legal flexibility to a community's legal procedure for dealing with conduct on the part of one individual that makes against the well-being of others.

(3) *That a foster mother successful with a girl of eleven will continue successful with her as an adolescent.* Mrs. Flaherty's attitudes of authority in rather minor matters might conceivably have yielded to tactful education from the visitor, though her idea of "conquering" a girl of fourteen did not seem promising. The experience of child-placing agencies has shown that a recurring reason for "replacements"—i. e. changing a child from one foster-home to another—is the occasional failure of a foster mother to adapt herself to the maturing of a young person.³ The introduction into the family group of another girl of about Elizabeth's age, a girl who excelled without effort just where Elizabeth fell short, and whose "daintiness" made the foster mother less patient with the awkward blunderings of her first boarding-charge, brought on a maladjustment similar in kind to that in her own home three years before. Once again other children of or near her own age were being preferred to her, and the place she had been winning for herself in the Flaherty home could no longer have seemed secure.

(4) *That the obstreperousness of the girl was a more serious thing than the apron-string docility of her brothers*

³ Healy, Bronner, Baylor, Murphy, *Reconstructing Behavior in Youth*, p. 205.

under their mother's clinging worry. At a conference between the social workers from the Hospital and from the Children's Agency, those present agreed that Elizabeth's problem demanded more thought and care than those of her brothers. Acting on this idea the children's visitors put most of their attention on the girl.

That the maladjustment in Elizabeth's case had reached an acute stage was clear enough. Her frictions with her mother, her uncontrol together with her badly expressed "boy-craziness," were moving toward catastrophe. Yet apron-string docility also represents maladjustment, of perhaps a more chronic sort. Its consequences are less easy to trace than are those of acutely embroiled situations, since by their very nature they are likely to be inconspicuous, their social "seriousness" being cumulative, and appearing for what it is only with the lapse of time. For instance, the shrinking from rubs and from difficult tasks noticeable in John, related as this was to his excessive filial dependence, might become a handicap for a life-time and bring hardships on a whole family circle.

(5) *That treatment in a selected environment will carry over into a child's adjustments at home.* The Children's Agency placed Elizabeth away from her own home in order to give her mother a rest and to reeducate the girl's own attitudes. An ultimate objective, however, since of course Elizabeth would return home after a time, was to further a re-adjusting of the relation between mother and daughter, to prepare the home to receive the child back.⁴ In addition, therefore, to making careful plans for Elizabeth, they also encouraged visits between her and her mother, and called

⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter xix, "The Child in Relation to His Own Family."

on Mrs. Kenny herself from time to time in an effort to help her see some of the more far-reaching needs of the children.

In a home situation like the one here presented, it is obvious enough that the mother's attitudes are as important as the daughter's. Difficult, however, as may be the re-education of a child, the re-directing of adult behavior makes a still heavier demand upon ingenuity, resourcefulness, and patience. A conscientious mother may not recognize her need for guidance as to home-making and child-training, the care of her own health, the developing of outside interests. For a children's agency to bring such counsel to her in an acceptable and effective way would at least double the time they must give to a need-situation like that of the Kenny family. Few agencies at present are in a position to do this. They must therefore trust that there will be a carry-over of a child's improvement in a foster-home into its home adjustments.

(6) *That right feelings toward a mother could be set up by appealing to the duty of filial love.* It will be recalled that Elizabeth told Mrs. Flaherty that she hated her own mother. The word "hate" may easily have been a childish exaggerated and simplified term for complex feelings—a conflict perhaps between affection and resentment at nagging and at favoritism toward her brothers. The agency visitor and Mrs. Flaherty naturally conceived the changing of this attitude as a major problem. The latter approached it by "getting her to see this (hate) as a wrong feeling"—that is, by representing filial love as a duty.

As an educative method this "telling" or exhorting has perhaps had some value in shaping generalized behavior "norms." It proceeds by holding trait ideals before the

minds of young people, and by praising or checking their conduct according as it displays loyalty, love, unselfishness, and so on. The assumption in the present instance was that once Elizabeth understood that it was her duty to love her mother and that it shocked others when she expressed a contrary feeling, she would be equipped to struggle with her resentments. In other words, once her intelligence grasped this ideal, her emotions would be brought into line, regardless of the circumstances. The method of moralistic "telling" appeared again when the visitor took Elizabeth to task for relapsing into her old habits of rudeness after another girl had entered Mrs. Flaherty's home. Judging by the written history, these women stressed the wrongness of certain behavior symptoms—unfilial speech and rudeness—and left out of account the situations in which these symptoms occurred, and within which lay their explanation and the conditions of cure.

Case C. Recovering Family Morale in Adversity

Situation 1

A Family Society in the middle west agreed to cooperate with the local public relief department of its city in tiding over the family of Mr. Snyder, a man of German parentage, out of work during business depression. The man, wife, and six children under twelve years were all in poor health, and this called for more aid than the maximum public allowance and for more individual attention than the public office could give. The need-situation, so far as relief and work were concerned, promised to be temporary.

The circumstances: The shoe factory where Mr. Snyder worked had shut down, and even under favorable business conditions operated irregularly, offering therefore poor pay with no future outlook. Mr. Snyder, however, was successful at

this work, whereas at running a cigar store which he had previously tried, he had failed through lack of managerial judgment. Even in semi-skilled factory work his value was impaired, according to his employer, by a difficulty in getting on with other workmen. All this, together with the fact that the family had been somewhat known to the Family Society of a near-by city, suggests a *marginal economic adequacy* that might have bearing on the family's poor health.

Mrs. Snyder was a Swedish woman of the capable sort who can turn a hand to anything practical. At the time of her marriage she had half completed a secretarial course; since marriage she had at times gone out as substitute stenographer, had helped with the store, could sew well, cook, and manage a small income to make the most of it. Her attitude toward her husband was at once maternal, loyal and affectionate, leading her to make him feel himself the head of the family, even when she actually made the important decisions. With her well-mannered children she was on terms of real friendship. She was always courageous and cheery.

Mr. Snyder had but one living relative, an elderly cousin, who had brought him up but of whom he had seen little since his marriage. Mrs. Snyder had parents, and two married brothers, all in fairly comfortable circumstances, though not inclined to make sacrifices for the Snyders.

Problem: To tide over a temporary need for relief and employment, and to get health guidance under way.

The agency's action: The Family Society, first, gave a small sum for coal, etc., till work was secured and later sent bountiful Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Second, they supplied Mr. Snyder with introductions to a free employment bureau and made application for him to the City Street Department, which was launching a new development of work that had been held waiting for just such a depressed period as the present one; in addition they introduced Mrs. Snyder to a philanthropic organization (the Sewing Society) that provided home sewing for needy housebound women. Third, they

called in a doctor and district nurse, and enlisted the interest of a Dispensary for tonsilectomy on the oldest girl.

Developments: In a short time the family were self-supporting by means of what one might call "extra-industrial" work. Mr. Snyder had a job with the City Street Department and Mrs. Snyder had home sewing. The Street Department work, however, was respected by the men who did it as being "real," in contrast, for instance, with the City Woodyard work—at which Mr. Snyder had been employed by the public relief department—which they looked upon as merely a device to safeguard relief. As for the home sewing, since the bedding and garments made for the Sewing Society were sold at market rates, this work was only semi-philanthropic.

Summary of developments: A beginning had been made at building up the family health, although it had become evident that it might take time before they were all in good condition. Economically the situation had become one of *tide-over self-support*.

Situation 2 (Four Months Later)

By the end of four months Mr. Snyder was back at the factory, though on a five-day week. It was necessary, therefore, that his wife should continue her sewing to supplement and stabilize the income. Health guidance was still needed. Also it began to appear that the baby was defective and Mrs. Snyder not well. The Dispensary social worker had become so much interested that her initiative in supplying medico-social guidance had become a constant factor in the situation.

Problems: (1) To help Mr. Snyder increase his earnings, and (2) to continue health care.

The agency's action: Country outings were secured for two children and the baby and Mrs. Snyder examined.

Developments: The children improved, the baby was treated for spastic paralysis and an operation for appendicitis was recommended for the mother.

Summary of developments: At the end of ten months, dur-

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ing which Mr. Snyder had been regularly engaged at his former employment, the family earnings, even as supplemented by Mrs. Snyder, were barely meeting necessities. This joint income represented a *marginal family wage*. The health needs were being guided by the Family Society in cooperation with health agencies.

Situation 3 (Ten Months Later)

The need for an operation on Mrs. Snyder meant securing a hospital bed and arranging for care of the children while she was away. Mrs. Snyder dreaded going to a public hospital because of the stigma attached to it. Mr. Snyder was too proud to accept public care for the baby; the private children's agency refused to care for a defective child as being a public responsibility; and the relatives refused to take any of the children except the oldest girl, who had been with the grand-parents some time. With Mrs. Snyder not working because of illness, the family income was reduced by about \$13 per week. Though Mr. Snyder was working steadily, his wages were insufficient to cover the needs of two adults and six children.

Problems: (1) To make arrangements for Mrs. Snyder's operation and for care of the children during her absence; (2) to help Mr. Snyder increase his earnings; (3) to conserve the health of a large family whose breadwinner could earn only enough for a small one.

The agency's action: A neighbor agreed to look after the children during their mother's medical care, and a free bed was secured for Mrs. Snyder at a private hospital.

Developments: Later Mrs. Snyder was sent to a convalescent home, where, however, she stayed only two or three days, owing to worry lest the neighbor who was caring for her baby might be neglectful. Though the attitude taken by her relatives toward helping with the children was nothing new, she was hurt by it. For the Family Welfare worker's painstaking interest she felt much appreciation.

Summary of developments: Adequate as was the Family

Society's guidance of health, they seemed to have exhausted their resources for helping Mr. Snyder's occupational need. The situation was one of *insufficient family income*.

Situation 4 (Two Months Later)

Mr. Snyder twice strained his back while at work. Though his employer gave him some compensation, he became greatly disheartened. He was disinclined to heed the doctor's advice that his need of dentistry might account for his back giving out. Then Mrs. Snyder became pregnant, and even her courage ebbed for a time. The baby was under medical treatment, two of the children had been advised tonsilectomy, two others needed building up, and none of them had enough recreation. The house they were living in had become unsanitary.

Problems: (1) To give the man's attitudes a more promising turn; (2) to build up family health, and to supply temporary financial relief; (3) to supply recreation or diversify interests, and to improve living quarters.

The agency's action: To meet these demands the Family Society supplemented the modest compensation allowance; provided clothing, a layette, etc.; secured pre-natal care for the mother and country outings for two children. The Dispensary attended to operations for the other two and notified the Board of Health of the condition of the house. The case worker sent movie tickets to two of the children.

Developments: The children improved in health, except the baby, who died. Despite the Board of Health, the landlord delayed making repairs to the house.

Summary of developments: Though the family health was gaining on the whole, the relation between their earnings and their expenses remained unimproved, and Mr. Snyder's attitude became one of *disheartened inadequacy in breadwinning*.

Situation 5 (Eight Months Later)

Mr. Snyder began to show an inability to hold himself together in a difficult situation. At the time of his wife's confine-

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ment he gave up his job because the foreman criticized his work, and then was dissatisfied with his new job—secured from an employment bureau to which the case worker had sent him—because he thought it “menial.” It was less well-paid than his former one. Rather than return for aid to the public relief office, he wanted to mortgage the furniture, and he talked of going off to the wheat fields.

After confinement Mrs. Snyder was quite run-down, one of the boys got an infected hand, and the house was still in an unsanitary condition. One constant stimulus to courage, however, had by this time become a part of Mrs. Snyder’s life. Two years of service on the part of the Family Society had been building up in her a strong confidence in the friendship and resourcefulness of the Society’s case worker. Her first trip out after the birth of her baby was to make a friendly call at the worker’s office.

Problem: To help Mr. Snyder to an attitude of courage. Increase in income and continued health care became subsidiary.

The agency’s action: In order to save the furniture from being mortgaged the Family Society gave temporary relief in food and cash, and employed Mr. Snyder on “made” work in their office—which last he evidently did not enjoy. His talk of leaving home he dropped after the worker jokingly threatened court action.

The Dispensary got a medical examination of Mrs. Snyder, and the Family worker secured a nurse and doctor to look after the boy’s hand. When the doctor diagnosed Mrs. Snyder’s condition as rheumatism, possibly due to tonsils, and advised she should not do hard work, the Family Society obtained money from a Private Relief Society to pay for wet wash and for milk for mother and boy. The worker also urged Mr. and Mrs. Snyder to move to better quarters.

Summary of developments: Mr. and Mrs. Snyder started hunting a new tenement; health care was continuing. The economic status of the family, however, was actually deteriorating

as the man's attitude toward his situation became one of *resentment at impaired self-respect*.

Situation 6 (Six Months Later)

Mr. Snyder was now working full time; yet his pay as before was inadequate to the family needs, and he was becoming very discouraged. The oldest boy was found to be quite backward at school, and to show a speech defect, Mrs. Snyder needed tonsilectomy and one of the girls was nervous and underweight after measles. The remaining children were attending school regularly and showed good care. The housing condition was still bad.

Problem: To devise ways of maintaining Mr. Snyder's courage and self-respect; to continue health care.

The agency's action: The Private Relief Agency continued milk, and money for wet wash, and the Family Society raised a small fund to pay for a housekeeper while Mrs. Snyder was at the hospital and convalescing; the Dispensary arranged to examine the oldest boy; a children's agency placed the convalescent boy in the country. The hospital made an appointment for Mrs. Snyder and gave her a formula for the baby in preparation for her leaving it, while an Outing Association provided country convalescence for mother and baby together. The Board of Health was consulted again about the tenement condition.

Developments: Mrs. Snyder had a successful operation and three weeks' rest following it. Mr. Snyder was left with household responsibilities which he found hard to bear up under in his state of economic discouragement. Although a neighbor looked after the children daytimes, he seemed to feel that he was carrying the heavy end of the family burdens. On hearing that his wife came through her operation well he replied that he had supposed she would. And when he was asked to send her clothing to her he answered that he was lying down and that the following week would be time enough. He thought nothing the matter with her but nervousness. Despite a prom-

ise to the contrary made to the Family worker, he kept writing her during the last week to come home because he was lonesome.

Further light was thrown on Mr Snyder's attitude when his wife related to the worker that though at the time of their marriage he dressed well and appeared to have a prosperous cigar store, it shortly developed that he was insolvent without knowing it, not having kept track of profit and loss. Later, when he took a small poultry farm, he did not want to work unless she was by his side. In order to help she had got outside work, but had come to believe this to have been a mistaken step.

The landlord was still dilatory about renovating the tenement.

Summary of developments: All the admirable health care for the family left the situation as a whole endangered by the man's increasing *resentment at his unsatisfactory status*.

Situation 7 (Three Months Later)

Matters rapidly became worse. Although Mr. Snyder secured a better position, his job was for only a five-day week and his pay still inadequate for his needs. While his wife was away in the country he started drinking, and even after her return got drunk from time to time, frightening the children. One week he lost his money while drunk, and after that his wife insisted on taking his pay envelope. His evenings he would spend reading get-rich-quick and adventure stories.

Mrs. Snyder became thoroughly discouraged. She felt the burden of bearing up her husband too heavy and thought seriously of separation. It seems that some years previous Mr. Snyder had taken to drink and she had left him for a time, gone to work, and boarded the children. A divorce she could not ask, because she felt responsible for him.

The oldest girl had all along been living with her grandmother. The oldest boy was now in a special class, a psychiatric examination giving hope that he was only temporarily retarded and would improve under training. The Dispensary was still actively cooperating in health guidance.

The house was in the same bad condition.

Problem: Important as was care for this family's health, this need had become overshadowed, as in the previous situation, by the *urgency for motivating a man who had lost his morale.*

The agency's action: The Family worker took up the matter of his drinking with Mr. Snyder and afterwards reported the source of his liquor supply to the police.

Developments: In this talk he gave more definite expression to his attitudes than ever before: His self-respect had suffered at his failure to provide for his family and at having his wife handle his pay. He felt that during Mrs. Snyder's absence from home he had been overworked, and was aggrieved that no one thought of giving him as well as his family a vacation. Drink, he said, was his way of making good this lack. The tone he took in speaking of his wife and children was disparaging. The children were kept unnecessarily clean, cleaner than their neighbor's children. As the worker understood him he was attributing his inadequacy as a provider to an unreasonable ambition in Mrs. Snyder that her children should appear more advantaged than those of other workingmen.

Mr. Snyder's aggrieved desire for recognition showed at his work as well as at home. His last employer said he threw up his job (during his wife's confinement) because he had to take his turn with the other men in cleaning up the work-room. Yet, though hard to get on with, he was a good steady workman.

Further agency action: To fill Mr. Snyder's surplus time the worker again offered him work in her office.

Developments: He agreed to the "made" work, which he did not like, because he recognized that he drank more when unoccupied. Whether owing to the case worker's efforts or not, he kept sober for six weeks and then broke out again.

When Mrs. Snyder told him that she was planning for a separation he was much disturbed and at once improved.

Further agency action: The Family and the Dispensary workers kept on with their detailed health guidance. In addition the former, appreciating that Mrs. Snyder was too house-

bound, persuaded her to attend a parent-teachers' club and to register for voting. She also supplied a good-looking two-piece dress as a necessary encouragement in the same direction.

Developments: Mr. and Mrs. Snyder both voted, and the dress the latter would put on evenings at the urge of her children and they would all dance together at home.

When the Board of Health condemned the house the family were in, the landlord, irritated at their having complained, gave an eviction notice.

Summary of developments: Although health guidance had been as assiduous as ever, it had become a secondary concern to that of maintaining the family integrity. Mr. Snyder, craving a recognition which he could not command, took to drink apparently as an *escape from a dignity-thwarting situation*.

Situation 8 (Nine Months Later)

Mr. Snyder threw up one good job, but immediately got another. He resented criticism and in effect seemed to ask for special favors at his work. His health was not good, his eyes bothering him.

With her husband beset by the temptation of liquor, Mrs. Snyder became desirous of moving out of the city where drink would be harder to get.

The situation as regarded the children was unchanged.

Problem: *To reshape Mr. Snyder's environment* in a way to reinforce his self-respect and to afford the minimum opportunity for drinking.

The agency's action: Under persuasion by the Family worker, Mr. Snyder attended an evening clinic, and was advised that his eye trouble was due to bad liquor and that if he continued such drink he would be blind before he was fifty.

Developments: This warning so impressed him that he stopped drinking and ate candy in place of it.

Further agency action: The family at last moved to a better tenement, which was fresh and clean. The Family Society secured funds to help with the moving and to supplement fur-

nishings. The Private Relief Society continued milk to build up the youngest boy after an illness. In the meantime the case worker had been inquiring as to prospects for Mr. Snyder's line of work in an outlying town and had suggested that he apply for a job there. When an offer came she encouraged him to accept it, and since he was dissatisfied with the job he was on, he did so and went ahead of his family in order to find a house. The Private Relief Society gave him money for his clothes and for rent for his family till they could join him.

Developments: Mr. Snyder's health began to improve at once in better air. Moreover in a small factory he was a more important figure than in a large firm. He reported that several suggestions he had made had been adopted by the factory, and that the other men said he was the best cutter they ever had. His employers offered him a large shack rent free for his family on the town outskirts, with lumber for putting in partitions, etc. His fellow workmen helped him repair the building. Unfortunately when he came to the city to escort his family to their new home, his work companions commissioned him to bring them back liquor, and the attendant temptation was too much for him. Despite this slip-back, the family got safely moved, the Private Relief Society helping out with the extra expenses.

The change to country life proved fortunate in all respects. The whole family gained in health. What with a garden, a river near-by, chickens and, after a time, a cow, they spent most of their time out of doors as long as the weather permitted. Mr. Snyder could get home for a hot lunch. The children liked their school and the oldest boy improved and was promoted. The vegetables, poultry, and the rent-free house meant that their income was adequate. The pleasures of a country life were enhanced by the purchase of a used car, toward which Mr. Snyder's cousin had contributed. During the summer the oldest girl's earnings as a nursemaid helped with the payments for this. In the winter she returned to her grandmother for the sake of further education.

The Family worker kept up a friendly correspondence with Mrs. Snyder and got out for an occasional call. She secured

hospital and convalescent care when the second girl had osteomyelitis. At Christmas the Family Society united with the Dispensary social service in sending toys and useful presents.

Summary of developments: The move to the country at one stroke met the two outstanding needs of hygiene for the family and of economic adequacy for Mr. Snyder. He had now a reasonable measure of *adequacy within a changed home-work situation* and was consequently contented.

In this case we see the Family Society helping to meet health and income needs with such close care that the Secretary's relation with the wife and mother of the family grew into one of personal friendship. Such intensive personal attention, when carried out by salaried workers, is obviously expensive, since the number of cases which any one visitor can carry decreases with her thoroughness in detailed care. In so far as this standard of intensiveness means care that gets clients "on their feet," it naturally represents the sort of work that agencies aim to do.

Again, as in Case A, we find it assumed that an acute need situation is a claim on the community resources. Help for the Snyder family was forthcoming from the Public Relief Department, the City Street Department, the Sewing Society, the District Nurse, and a Dispensary with its social service. Each of these agencies provided its own special form of help to meet special kinds of need—income, employment, health care. Again there is a choice between organizations doing somewhat similar work. The Public Relief Department and the Family Society both care for needy families in their homes, the former stressing material relief and the latter varied service adapted to individual needs of health, recreation, special training, and so on. Two tax-supported undertakings, the City Woodyard and the Street Department, offered work for unemployed heads of needy

families, the former requiring two or three days of wood-sawing per week in return for material relief, the latter offering wages for five and one half days per week for city work planned in advance and held waiting for periods of depression. The choice between these latter resources would take account of the fact that the men themselves respect the second as "real" work, and probably respect themselves more while engaged on it than they do while giving what may seem like merely a forced return for aid. Sewing Societies can range from a small informal church group that gives out and pays for plain sewing on goods to be donated to some charity, to a formal organization that employs a certain number of fairly skilled women and sells its products on some non-competitive basis. The Society that was turned to for Mrs. Snyder was selected because, being of the latter sort, it could give her enough work to net a substantial increase to the family income. As in Case A, the Family agency took responsibility for a general guidance of the case and for a correlating of all these services from other social resources.

Other social assumptions may be noted in this case as figuring in the "philosophy" (avowed or implicit) of family case-work agencies:

(1) *That society expects the choice of clients for agency ministrations to be determined by need alone, rather than by need as appearing in situations that are socially instructive.* The Family Welfare Society responded to the public official's request that they assume responsibility for the Snyder family's care, because there was need of health guidance more continued and detailed than the public body could offer, and quite possibly also because this was a family of good standards. It was a need-situation which came within

the function of this society, with which they were well-fitted to cope, and which they felt would repay their outlay of time and thought. They received it as an individual instance of need—one of an unending stream—which they would meet each with the utmost individualizing attention in their power. In thus assuming care they were not thinking of this case as promising to reveal elements similar in instructive respects to those appearing in others of their cases. Their purpose, in short, did not include any “laboratory” concern with the case as displaying data for social science.

(2) *That, once having assumed responsibility for a case, the agency should treat its needs as adequately as time and skill permit, regardless of the other cases it might have embarked upon.* The Family Welfare, as a privately financed agency in a city with a public relief department, could to some extent select whom it would assist. Whereas the public department may, under pressure of work, find itself unable to do more than to give material relief with judgment, the private agency can give such attention to the varied aspects of cases it “accepts” as will help each to become self-directing. When this becomes impossible, as in depression times when the case load grows heavy, then they may select, out of their numerous clients, certain ones for whom they try to give thoroughly adequate guidance, limiting their attention in other cases to such fundamentals as income and serious ill-health. This course they would follow partly in order to keep before themselves a high standard of work which they would hope to extend to all their cases as their funds permitted, and partly to maintain keenness of interest in their able workers—since intelligent and educated employees cannot be content if confined to work that does not

bring their powers into play and give them a sense of growth in skill.

Quite commonly, a basis of choice for intensive care is the promisingness of outcome in a given case. People of respectable standards, of previous good character, of intelligence, clients who have turned to organized agencies for the first time, whose need looks as if it might be "temporary," any such seem likely to repay an outlay of time—which is money. Reasons of this sort figured in the choice of the Snyder family for special care. If the whole purpose of case work is to rehabilitate citizens one by one, then their "promisingness" would seem to be a natural and valid basis of selection.

(3) *That sympathy begins with the mother filling her maternal rôle under difficulties, rather than with the father failing as a "provider."* It is not until Situation 7 that one feels sure that the case worker is sensing Mr. Snyder's chagrin at his half-success and the effects which his attitudes have on the need-situation. Her prior, and apparently more spontaneous, sympathy for the wife—not uncommon to find in case work—can be accounted for in several ways. First, the worker sees more of her than of her husband. She can be visited through the day whereas the man can be met only at specified times. Second, the mother is concerned with the details of daily living: budgeting, diet, cleanliness, health care, the education and training of the children. Since the well-being of the home and the children is a major concern of a social agency, mother and worker are likely to consult often over these intimate matters, and therefore to become well-acquainted. Third, the social worker, being usually a woman, has a readier understanding of a woman's

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household struggles than of a man's industrial bafflements. A fourth influence making toward sympathy with the wife in this instance may have been the fact that the latter was a person of intelligence and character. A capable, balanced, affectionate wife and mother engages liking and respect from anyone, social worker or otherwise. The very warmth of interest which such a woman's bravely-met trials excite may indispose an outsider toward patience with the inadequacies of a perhaps less attractive husband. That Mr. Snyder felt a preference to have been shown for his wife is evidenced by his defensive excuse that since "no one gave him a vacation, his vacation was drink."

This assumption would not be avowed by any agency. Indeed it would be deprecated. It is here mentioned as an example of various motivations of case-work practice which really color the social thinking of the worker, and hence the "philosophy" of the agency, even though they are not consciously accepted but are simply injected into social thinking by our moralistic and domestic habits of valuation. As case workers become more committed to a scientific approach to behavior "situations," they will be less uncritically swayed by the popular ways of judging people.

In these three histories case work presents itself as a characteristic form of social endeavor in a modern community. As such it has developed its own institutions, standards, and outlook, so that it repays study, whether one approaches it as affording the student a career, or as displaying possible lines of growth in society. Its growth at any place and time is evidently in part a question of what the community has to show in the way of institutions, agencies, endowments,

etc., all of which presuppose some decades of prosperity and a tradition of general support for philanthropy. Where this condition is favorable the case worker can deal with the individual requirements of each need-situation by a correlating of many specialized resources. Indeed, it is just this interrelating of varied services for the benefit of one case—health, education, employment, relief, recreation—that constitutes a considerable part of what is called “individualized” care. The “organizing of resources” is a part of case-work technique that becomes increasingly important with the number and diversity of institutions available to help out persons of extremely small income. It means that some one agency usually assumes responsibility for starting and maintaining team play among a number of other agencies and of persons, as did the Family Society in the first and third histories.

Another condition of progress in case work is seen in the case load ⁶ per worker, which at any given time—as in an industrial depression—may mean increases in the numbers of people served at some cost to the quality of the service. Where case loads are moderate, the agencies make notable advances beyond any mere relieving of hunger and cold. Outstanding, perhaps, in these three histories is the detailed attention paid to health care. This has followed from the growth in recent years of medical knowledge, hospital facilities, and of medical social service departments. In addition the first and third histories manifest thought and competence in meeting the special income requirements of the given situation, and all the histories show an enlisting

⁶ The “case load” is the number of cases for which a given worker is responsible, or the average number per worker in a given agency.

of those social influences that make for character and happiness. Varying needs are met systematically and with "individualizing" appropriateness under the guidance of devoted and competent persons.

Lastly we can see that the growth of case work is most significantly a question of the level at which agencies are doing their psycho-social thinking. For example, the relation of worker and client is conceived at a higher level where the latter is not a mere receiver of help but an active participant in the making of social adjustments. Miss Horan, once she was shown the practical possibility of a comfortable home outside a hospital, did everything in her power to make the arrangements a happy success. Elizabeth Kenny grew to exert herself to win approval, studying, practising her singing, struggling with her temper. Mrs. Snyder, with the Family Society and the Dispensary workers planned together like friends, and though the move to the country may have been fostered by the workers, the decision was made by the family themselves and the latter worked hard to make good in new surroundings. While it is true that case workers exercise persuasion to bring short-sighted judgments to further-sighted ones, they at least assume that any course of treatment will carry through effectively only if clients and others concerned all share in the planning and bringing about of ends that are jointly desired. Such assumptions, as we have noted them in the histories here commented on, can be seen as a part of the social standards and ways of thinking that make our national American culture what it is. Some of them, we shall see, stir a good deal of questioning, and in our effort to follow these questionings to new insights and convictions we shall be sharing in the growth of our national culture itself.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Read a case record from a family agency⁶ and outline the course of relations between worker and client group according to the scheme of "situation-steps" by which Cases A, B, and C are displayed.
2. In reflecting on Case A:
 - (a) Note, between each situation and the one following it, which elements in the case continue *unchanged*, and which are so changed as to require a restating of the treatment problem.
 - (b) Say what you can make out as the needs which the Almshouse in your community aims to meet. Would it meet the needs of Miss Horan?
 - (c) State what you understand by a client's attitude describable as "institutionalized" (Cf. p. 7 and 8). How does this resemble a "pauperized" attitude?
3. In reflecting on Case B:
 - (a) Say who would be expected to re-shape such a parent-child unadjustment if the family were well-to-do.
 - (b) What do such outside interests as a Mothers' Club or a Voters' League do for the "personal" emotions of a woman in Mrs. Kenny's position—for her worry, irritability, etc.?
 - (c) At what age should a child be helped to see just what are the real difficulties of relationship between him and others in his family? If the child needs this insight, who should be expected to help him to it?—The foster mother?—The visitor?
4. In reflecting on Case C:

Describe, from your own experience, your reading, or from the records of a social agency, some other instance of the solving of difficulties by transferring a person (or group) from circumstances that are too much for him to circumstances better answering to his abilities.

⁶ Among published records good examples can be found in Sophonisba P. Breckinridge's *Family Welfare Work in a Metropolitan Community*. University of Chicago Press.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS "SUCCESS" IN CASE WORK?

Any study of the activities of case-work agencies must begin by asking, "Just what are they trying to do?" And it is not enough to content oneself with merely vague answers, such as, "Helping people who are in difficulties." The question looks to the way one is conceiving of "difficulties" and to the wider or narrower scope of each agency's concern. The relief, rehabilitation, or guidance of persons in need means one thing if we are thinking of misfortune as mainly outside of social control—as something that is social only in the sense that many persons are hit by it, like ships in a storm. Rehabilitation means quite another thing if we think of misfortune as arising from social conditions, as involving social values in which fortunate and unfortunate alike have a stake, and as something that can be progressively diminished by the discovery and use of the right social techniques. If an agency conceives misfortune and need in the former way, it will presumably think of itself simply as trying to salvage individuals, one by one, getting each "on his own feet again," for his own sake. It finds the client under certain disabilities, such as unemployment, illness, family friction, and seeks to rehabilitate *him*—unless his disability is one, such as chronic sickness or old age, that it can only palliate. If, however, an agency conceives the difficulties of life in the latter way—as arising not so much for each person in his individual capacities, as for a group

in certain relationships and interactions, it will think of itself as "helping people," to be sure, but helping them in ways that shape cooperative controls, so that our group-conditioned standards and practices are the better for its part in the personal adjustments.

That such differences in the way case work may be conceived are not merely imaginary we can realize by asking why it is that agencies which used to call themselves "organized charities" no longer do so. The idea of "charity" is associated with a social order in which the economic and social status of individuals are comparatively fixed, and in which misfortunes are seen as a personal visitation. Advantaged citizens of kind heart are (in such relative circumstances) under an obligation to relieve the sufferings of the disadvantaged. In an earlier age they were said to "give alms to the poor." Today, as we come to recognize how individual needs are bred in industrial and social conditions and as we gain confidence that the influences making for poverty, sickness, and faulty conduct may through collective effort be brought under an increasing measure of control, we think of the troubles that case work deals with in terms at once less static and less narrowly personal. Such terms as "pauper," "destitute," "indigent" are felt as invidious because they imply a fixed status of a personally inferior sort.

PRESENT ACCEPTED TESTS

These considerations make it evident that in asking what our case-work agencies are trying to do we must realize that changes in the social thinking of the community will affect the aims of the agency and hence the tests by which it expects to judge its success. The agencies whose records we

have been quoting from as representing a good average standard of practice would accept the following as tests of success in modern case work:

- (1) the readjustment of the client;
 - (2) the spread of good social standards from the "case" to the neighborhood;
 - (3) the impact of the case on institutions and society;
 - (4) a growth of social insight for patrons and workers.
- Each of these "tests" may be made clear by illustration:

1. The Readjustment of the Client

A case worker naturally desires her efforts to end with the client able to direct his own life without agency assistance. This may come about through improved health, through getting established in steady work, through learning how to budget wisely, through modifications of attitude in himself or his family, or through these and various favorably altered circumstances. That case is successful in which the client has become "rehabilitated," or "readjusted." Thus in Case B, if we take as the test the improvements observable in Elizabeth Kenny, we note her growth in diversity and wholesomeness of interests, in refinement of speech, and in consideration for other people. Her attitude toward her mother and brothers grew more affectionate, and her own self-respect was built up by small successes at school and in the foster-home. She progressed also in music and in housekeeping skill. It is not surprising that as this advance continued for three years, even though with ups and downs, the second visitor should come to feel the case an assured success, and to hope that the girl could do much for her family on her return home.

In Case C, if we measure readjustment in terms of the

client alone, or of each family member taken separately, we should list health gains, an income supplemented by means of a garden, the man's contentment in his work, his gain in self-respect, the wife's gain in a sense of security. If we measure the readjustment in terms of relationships—in terms including that which they got adjusted to—we should note that the surroundings in a small community gave the family opportunity for a wholesome sharing in the responsibility for group upkeep, through the raising of vegetables and poultry, and for pleasures in common through the car. In the simpler setting they gained more control over their own fortunes. Along with this we might question whether the relations within the group itself were all of a maturing sort, with the wife and mother continuing to make her husband feel himself to be the family guide whereas it was she who actually made the decisions.

The test of personal readjustment was given an explicit formulation in 1929 by a committee of the American Association of Social Workers:

"Social case work deals with the human being whose capacity to organize his own normal social activities may be impaired by one or more *deviations* from accepted standards of normal social life of which the following are typical:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| alcoholism | destructive and uncon- |
| bad housing | structive behavior |
| casual labor | drug addiction |
| child labor | family antagonisms |
| common law marriage | family dependency |
| communicable disease | family desertion |
| crime | foreigners [prejudice |
| delinquency | against] |
| dependent orphanhood, widow- | homelessness |
| hood, old age | illegitimacy |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| illiteracy | pauperism |
| instability | physical handicap |
| insufficient wage | physical ill health |
| lack of skill in trade | prostitution |
| mental ill health | seasonal employment |
| migrancy | subnormal mentality |
| non-conformity | truancy |
| non-support | unemployment |
| over-crowding | unprotected childhood |
| over-indulgence | vagrancy |
| parental neglect | |

"We suggest that the distinguishing concern of social case work is the capacity of the individual to organize his own normal social activities in a given environment."¹

2. *The Neighborhood Spread of Good Social Standards*

An agency's efforts at meeting the needs of a client may have an outreach such that a growth in one family in standards of home-making, of hygiene, of child-training, in wholesomeness of interests and attitudes does not confine itself to the one family, but spreads to relatives and neighbors. This may come about through the chance contacts of daily life, or it may be deliberately planned with the client. The first sort of spread was in the mind of a worker with pre-delinquent girls, when she referred to her own activities as having a preventive as well as a corrective aim. Her agency she thought of as engaged not just in saving this or that girl from personal deterioration but also as changing what might be evil contagions between them and others into good social influences. The second

¹ *Social Case Work: A Report of the Milford Conference*, p. 16.

sort of educational spread naturally takes place in the talks between a children's agency visitor and a foster-home mother. The latter, if she have children of her own, learns much for her own family from the shared guiding of a foster child. Such a test of the value of work may be none the less real because it is difficult to trace.

In the cases we have recounted this test of "neighborhood spread" does not seem to have been much in the workers' minds. In Case B the only spread of knowledge or ideas among other persons than the client that was consciously planned was the hoped-for influence of Mrs. Flaherty, the foster mother, on the home-making and child-training of Mrs. Kenny, and possibly some suggesting to the latter that she avoid evident favoritism when Elizabeth made home visits. (Witness Elizabeth's appreciation of her mother's care in making her Christmas presents as attractive as her brothers'.) Apparently also some effort was made by the first visitor to help Mrs. Kenny recognize her mistakes in handling John. Mrs. Flaherty herself may have learned something from the Children's Agency regarding child care, more especially, one would judge, from the first visitor, who put much thought on the foster child's needs. In Case C Mr. Snyder's employer in the town to which he and his family moved may have gained from the district secretary some new understanding of the discouragements besetting half-skilled factory workers, such as would be of use to him with other employees. She had talked with this employer or his personnel manager beforehand. None of this, however, is recorded, and quite possibly the case workers themselves took little heed of their success in these directions.

3. *The Impact of the Case on Institutions and Society*

The wider consequences of an agency's work, as case follows case over periods of time, touch the lives of many people. Its policies, together with the policies of all the community agencies, affect the attitudes, expectations, and plans, not only of clients but of numerous other persons who are living near the margin of need. In Case A the agency that helped Miss Horan was influencing her relatives—not very near relatives at that—to feel that it was a matter of family self-respect to make sacrifices rather than allow her to go to the Almshouse. If agencies generally exercise this influence on people's attitudes toward family solidarity, and toward the Almshouse as inappropriate for the last days of an artisan, it will mean that the "Miss Horans" of society can expect a certain preferential treatment when they fall into adversity. Another consequence of each case treatment appears in its impact on the working policies of cooperating institutions in the community. When the case worker weaned Miss Horan from the Chronic Hospital, she was at the same time releasing a bed there for some more helpable patient and leading the General Hospital to take on—in its extremely busy medico-social department—an exacting and unhelpful case. To this extent she was involving the policies and procedures of these institutions—and as the situation developed, of other community agencies as well—so that her case was really making "philanthropic law" by the decisions which it drew from various community officials.

If we look not on each case as it passes but on the course of case work as a whole as it moves through many agencies in many communities, we may come to rate its success

by the measure in which it counts toward the stabilizing of social values that are jeopardized by the acute needs of underprivileged lives. Individuals of public spirit can of course do much, but what any one of them does is likely to fluctuate with changes in his interest, with competing claims on his time, and to lapse with his death, whereas our case-work institutions carry over the permanent organized concern of many individuals in advancing the good life for society. What they can do, of course, depends on the prosperity of our economic institutions, so that in acute depression long continued they may share in the general failure of functions. In the main, however, they serve as bulwarks on the defense line of our national culture. They are saying, in effect, to each new generation that standards of home life, of work conditions, health, leisure time activities, opportunities in education and so on, should not be permitted to drop below certain points, and that the public is guarding these standards not only for the sake of individuals near the economic danger-line, but for the sake of the race, of the nation as a whole.

4. *The Growth of Social Insight for Patrons and Workers*

If workers, by recognizing what is typical in the need-situations they meet, can bring system into their own thinking, and instructive meaning into their experience, both they and their board and committee members can profit themselves and can be the means of an educative spread. Even where its efforts in a client's behalf have brought little or no result, an agency can, in so far as it senses or identifies what is recurring in need-situations, learn enough as to why they failed, to justify the time and

money they have spent. In the nature of things social case work is bound to show frequent failures and even more half-successes. If a disappointing outcome is looked at in terms of the individual case alone, it teaches little and is merely disheartening; if, however, its similarities to other cases are brought out, it will yield clues for guiding worker and committee members nearer to success with the next client or in their own life contacts. What they learn becomes part of the philosophy and purpose of their joint endeavors.

In Case B, for example, they would doubtless recognize a "type" of experience in a mother with insufficient outside contacts and interests nervously holding her more tractable children close to her and antagonizing the more vigorous one. Mrs. Kenny had a small income and was in run-down health. Another woman might have a comfortable income and good health and yet be the centre of a similar home situation. The recurring feature here would be the dependence of a mother on pre-adolescent children for the whole of her mental life, its emotional effect on the children, and her need of finding outside interests to balance this maternal over-absorption. Again, in Case C they would see the sense of inadequacy in a husband and father and its disturbing influence on his family and work relations as representing a "type" of family experience. In another family the wife might handle the husband less tolerantly than Mrs. Snyder, he might turn to sex irregularities instead of to drink, and the way out might be otherwise than through moving to a smaller community. Nevertheless that kernel feature of a sense of inadequacy in the head of the house, its defensive effects on home and work relations, and the need for recognizing and meeting the sources of the attitude

rather than blaming the behavior through which it is expressed, would be similar whether the family were rich or poor.

These illustrations suggest how patrons and workers of agencies can seek to gain in social insights through their work with individual clients. Curiously enough, it often seems difficult for people to see the situation of a family in need of help from a welfare agency as really similar to situations in families of the well-to-do. Their minds are so caught by the conspicuous accompaniments of inadequate income, and by a usual difference in education and perhaps in the "language of emotion" that they fail to recognize the likenesses in attitudes and social interplay. Yet while poverty aggravates any ill, and a lack of education leaves feelings to be crudely expressed, the behavior aspects which figure largely in the need-situations coming to social agencies are merely more pronounced instances of situations which appear at all social levels.

Incidentally, the paid workers of an agency and its board and committee members alike tend to improve on the crude ethical thinking which prevails on the subject of "service." People in comfortable circumstances usually view social service as something that one person does "unselfishly" (that is, with neglect of his own interests) for the good of others less fortunate. They have no conception of the "self" as *growing* by uses of its powers in ways that enrich the common life. Rather they think of "persons" as stationary tanks of private satisfactions, such that what one does for another's gain must be at his own loss. Against this notion social work joins with educational psychology in seeing the person who seeks activities that result in shared satisfactions as one who is steadily becoming "more of a per-

son"—that is, developing interests and powers on more inclusive levels of self-expression.

THE TESTS AS PRODS TO SOCIAL QUESTIONINGS

Each of these tests by which we judge of "success" in social work will stir the student to certain questions and challenges as he applies them to the samples of case experience we have seen. Thus in Case B, where the aim was a readjustment for a troublesome girl, he may well ask, "*Just what was the readjusting to take in?*" Was the agency seeking favorable changes mainly within Elizabeth, counting on bettered health, attitudes, and interests to make her thereafter better self-directing, or was it seeking changes *mutual* to Elizabeth and the persons and circumstances in her setting? If the maladjustment lay within her feelings and action-tendencies, then one might say, Retrain the child, and the agency's work is done.² If, however, the maladjustment lay partly in untoward home conditions, with misbehavior resulting from thwarts and frictions, then one would say, the "readjusting" must include elements in the child's home, school, neighborhood companions—in short, it should end with an adjusted *situation*. One might even hold that a lesser improvement which took in these interplaying factors would prove more lasting than

² This view of readjusting appears clearly in Healy & Bronner's *Reconstructing Behavior in Youth*, a study of problem children placed under foster care. The authors state that "Success, most conservatively stated, means that the individual, whether presenting behavior, personality, or habit problems, has made a steady gain in his ability to master his difficulties and maintain his position as a desirable member of a family and of a community." Success and failure, therefore, are here based on "observed behavior in the foster homes." In other words "success" is thought of as a readjusting of the child's attitudes alone, to be measured by its development when placed out, rather than as a bettered end result in child-home-neighborhood relations.

a greater behavior gain which was developed with the child in isolation.

Our first question has had to do with a contrast of ideas as to "readjusting"—as to its inclusiveness as a "girl character" process or as a "girl situation" process. Another question comes up as soon as we study the use of the foster-home in Elizabeth's case as a temporary setting favorable to her reeducation. Suppose we begin by noting the significant differences between what she found in her own and in the foster-home.

(1) In the girl's own home her relations with her mother had become embroiled by naggings and by unfavorable comparisons with her brothers on the one side, and by aggrieved feelings, tantrums, and an escape to the street on the other. Moreover, the home was not well-ordered. The mother's health being poor, recourse was had to ready-cooked foods, and housekeeping lagged. A girl of eleven was old enough to want more attractive surroundings, and not old enough to see and be tolerant of slackness as a consequence of low vitality. Although one may believe that underneath the friction between mother and daughter lay real affection, common experience tells us that one occasion of family quarreling easily breeds another. Each side grows to *expect* rudeness, or slights, or domination or rebellion. This becomes especially likely where the mother is in such a run-down condition as makes her easily excitable.

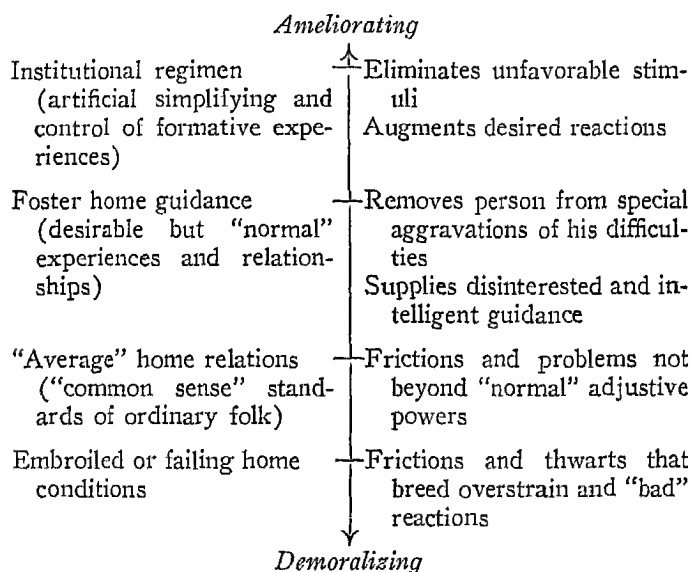
(2) In the foster-home Elizabeth was at once removed from the interplay of enchanneled emotions that had stood in the way of improvement in her attitude in her own family and neighborhood. Mrs. Flaherty, interested in and, as time went on, fond of Elizabeth, yet had more detachment toward her rudeness, for instance, than her own parents

could have. Moreover, she was in good health and maintained a well-kept home at approximately the same income level as the Kennys'. She was a well-poised woman, on terms of open and expressed affection with her own children, ready to avert friction with a joke. Her daughters were evidence of her success as a mother, the elder's happiness in marriage entering into the quality of the Flaherty's home life. In this well-ordered, sunny household, composed of wholesome people who had not shared the unhappy experiences of her childhood, Elizabeth's attitude toward small provocations would be less ready-cocked for trouble, so to speak, as would also be theirs toward her. Both sides would be free from those stored memories that accumulate in family misunderstandings and that turn trifling remarks and actions into irritating symbols of dissatisfaction. In other words, the provocations to misbehavior in the foster-home would be less frequent as well as less acute. This easing of undue strain on the adaptive powers of a child, while still giving it, under direction, diversity and freedom of experience, is what is sought by placing-out as a method of care.

Where social work thus deals with what is faulty in a client's attitudes and habits by a temporary "frame-up" of ameliorating influences we have a question *how regimented or simplified should this reeducative setting be?* It must evidently present certain controlled conditions which awaken, coordinate, and augment or weaken behavior impulses in desirable ways. Yet it must not leave the client with his improved behavior *dependent* on controlled conditions. If he is put into a setting which is selectively wholesome as a corrective offset to a setting which has been selectively vicious, there should be special insights and

skills to determine (1) *how* selective the new setting need be, and (2) what *weaning* will bring the client back to live successfully in ordinary environments, not picked to strengthen what is best and neutralize what is faulty in his character.

"Behavior settings" may be viewed as ranging up and down a scale somewhat as follows:



It seems evident that the *whole course* of reeducation such as was sought for Elizabeth is one that asks the case worker to become an educator who can tell (1) how far up the scale to make her corrective starts, and (2) how far down the scale to expect her client to end with stability. Elizabeth in the foster-home sustained herself in every-day relations that were *to be desired*: the worker's aim was to see

her at last self-sustained in every-day relations that were *to be expected*.

The aim of "readjustment" puts the case worker in a position of responsibility for the *methods* by which her clients are getting educational help. In Case B (p. 27) Elizabeth needed to learn a grace of carriage more becoming to her age. The foster mother, with the best of intentions, used methods which an educator would challenge. She not only made unfavorable comparisons between the girl and her more accomplished fellow-boarder but allowed the other girl to laugh at her awkwardness. Here the visitor should have been alert to what was happening. One thing Elizabeth was learning was that Mrs. Flaherty cared less than she had supposed about maintaining affectionate relations with her. Any sense of security in the friendly place she had been making for herself in this family must have been shaken. The girl's jealousy of her fellow-boarder, who was so easily successful in a daintiness that was difficult for her, suggests that Mrs. Flaherty's method of inculcating feminine grace—by holding up an example beyond the powers of a vigorous but ungainly girl, and then penalizing her failures by ridicule—was actually teaching unsocial resentments. A girl of fourteen needed no stimulus toward *desiring* grace of body. What Elizabeth did need was to be shown *how* to gain as much bodily control as was within her reach, and *how* to look and be more comely, without loss of respect for her own very different gifts. The foster mother's mistakes at this point make one question how far social work has assimilated the principles of progressive education.⁸

⁸ The educative result of any experience appears not simply in what the learner comes to know but in what he comes to *be*—in his resulting

The test of case work which looks to its wider sociological consequences stirs some needed questioning as to the intake policies of private agencies. In most parts of the country the government, acting through state departments of public welfare, county commissioners, town overseers of the poor, etc., takes a responsibility for helping needy people with food, shelter, medical care, and other forms of "relief." As time goes on these public agencies tend to develop their functions, doing "outdoor relief" (aid to people in their homes as contrasted with aid given in institutions) more adequately, taking on the care of indigent old people, or of dependent mothers with children, and (in the more progressive communities) including in their care something of guidance toward personal adjustments as well as mere sustenance and cure of ailments. This means

appreciations and preferences (attitudes, habits, and interests). Indeed, an educative experience makes three "learnings" go on all at once, viz :

- (1) Primary learnings, the specific matters of information or skill that are being directly sought;
- (2) Associate suggestions, ideas called up by the matters under study, but not immediately pertinent to what is sought;
- (3) Attendant learnings, the general attitudes, dispositions, and standards that give direction to one's satisfactions and dissatisfactions.

The "attendant learnings" appear in attitudes toward people, feelings about one's self, attitudes toward work or toward regulations, standards of accuracy, integrity, etc. These are built up by impressions in our experiences. They mean that *how* we learn makes a difference in *what* we learn.

Since the aim of education is to make the learner not simply informed, but disposed to do and able to determine what is desirable, the educator will contrive to make the most of "intrinsic" incentives. An "intrinsic" incentive to an educative act is a satisfaction with the activity itself, as springing from the learner's own interest in it. Such incentives enlist the whole self to practise with satisfaction whatever helps forward the learning process. Rewards and penalties, on the other hand, are incentives that are arbitrarily attached to the desired act. Such incentives require careful and sparing use, since they are apt to cause educational miscarriages. They build no satisfactions in the desired activity itself, and may involve actually bad attendant learnings.

See W. H. Kilpatrick, *Foundations of Method* (The Macmillan Company). (Summary by A. D. Sheffield in *Creative Discussion*)

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that private agencies for case work can in some measure feel free to choose what kinds of need they will deal with, and how many clients at a time they will attempt to carry. And it is manifestly important to society that they base these choices on principles that will prove socially beneficial in the long run.

A private social agency here has a special responsibility that arises from its special advantages. In structure it typically is one of the organized interests of the community, made up of (1) a staff of trained workers (visitors, supervisors, executive) and clerical assistants, (2) a sponsoring board of influential volunteers, and (3) a supporting constituency really responsive to the needs of the underprivileged. Since these donors pay taxes toward the public agencies, their gifts and bequests to the private amount to a voluntary supertax on the well-to-do. Where the public authorities are equal to the general run of mere relief-demands—which of course they must take unselectively on the basis of need alone—the private agency may take cases on the basis of results to be sought through intensiveness of treatment, and can be its own judge as to what and how many cases it shall concentrate on, and toward what end. Since this means that certain clients out of the general run will get personal attentions and services on a relatively deluxe scale, the agency which thus favors them must be asked, "To what socially significant ends is this selection being exercised?"

The answer which agencies usually make to this question—in practice if not professedly—is that preferential intensive care is justified when it is spent on clients which are thereby enabled to "get on their feet" and sustain themselves thereafter above the dependency line. Young clients,

or people who seem responsive to help, or whose disabilities look to be temporary—all rate as clients who repay money and effort because they are "promising." Any outlay on them that checks physical or social deterioration is felt as preventive of outlays in the future. Especially is this felt to be the case where health care and educational guidance is supplied for growing children. In effect this intake policy means that public agencies are expected to apply tax-derived funds to long continued cases—especially where low mentality or bad habits keep relief on a merely palliative level, while private agencies specialize on skilled care for cases that promise to end with clients that are social assets.

"Promisingness," however, is a somewhat uncertain basis of choice. Need-situations being highly complex, their promise for betterment is a matter of degrees and kinds. They may be, and indeed usually are, hopeful in some directions and discouraging in others. Moreover, important factors affecting their outlook may not come to light at first, so that cases seeming to promise well may with time show baffling limitations, just as those looking at first unfavorable may reveal unsuspected possibilities. For this reason even the most careful agencies find that in a number of instances, they have given generous efforts with scant results. It has even happened that a government department for child care, required by public opinion if not by law to take all comers (however unpromising) on the basis of need alone, and to give them all equal attention, has yet come out with nearly as good a proportionate showing for its efforts as that of its neighboring private organizations. Moreover the "promise" of a case is a matter not simply of the gravity of its handicaps but of the available insights and skills for

dealing with them. Disabilities which in themselves are not baffling may through unenlightened case treatment prove in the end more socially disqualifying than deep disabilities which are treated by psychologically effective procedures.

All this raises the question whether private agencies, as they look ahead, may not shift from "promisingness" as a basis of case selection to the *social instructiveness* of cases that fall into significant types. At present the situations which an agency is handling at any one time are likely to be of many different types. In any one week it may accept for care ten new cases, say, all "promising," yet each unlike the others in important aspects. A staff worker, therefore, engrossed in the details of Case Y, which follows immediately upon Cases U, V, W, X of quite unlike sorts, does not become aware of similarities in pattern between Case Y and Case M, which came to her a month ago. For any fruitful lessons from case experience these similar need-situations must be seen together, so that the distinctive elements which figure in the cause and cure of trouble will stand out in cases of the *type* in which the breadwinner's sense of economic inadequacy interferes with home morale; or of the type in which house-bound mothers depend for their inner life on children that are showing behavior problems; or of that in which sub-normal, though uncommittable, parents are having difficulty with their own and their offsprings' social adaptations. The advances in social insight and skill that private agencies may achieve in this way will in effect *raise the level of "promisingness" for whole classes of case-situation* by adding to the fund of available diagnostic conceptions and resources.

In Chapter I we inspected three typical records which displayed how case work presents itself, and we noted that the social treatment in these cases expressed a number of social assumptions which are important (1) because whether sound or unsound they are being given a widespread actual currency through the case-work practices of the country, and (2) because in their nature and in their processes of change they repay study as a part of the cultural growth of America. In the present chapter we have tried to take the point of view and to put the questions which will define our concern as students of case work, viewing its aims and its tests of success as these suggest varying possibilities of development. Our discussion of these questions should have brought out *what it is that makes case work significant, why it is that workers need to think through the validity of their objectives and their methods.* Another question is now waiting for us. It arises at the point where social work touches social science, and has to do with the units in terms of which desired gains are best achieved by people in worker-client relations. This question will bring us to think *how it is that the flowing complexity of life situations can be dealt with in units compassable for insight and control.*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. If the social worker is to help people make personal readjustments in situations of family friction, of "problem children," of inadequate earning-power, what kinds of special knowledge does she need for her part?
2. In Case B the second worker's method of help to Elizabeth (p. 33) was that of "telling" the girl how wrong her behavior had been; the foster mother's method (p. 32) was

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to "tell" the girl how wrong it was for her to hate her mother. Discuss this method in the light of the following quotation:

"In commands, prohibitions, approvals and disapprovals, the stimuli proceed from persons with a direct view to influencing (the action of others). Since in such cases we are most conscious of controlling the action of others, we are likely to exaggerate the importance of this sort of control at the expense of a more permanent and effective method." John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (The Macmillan Company), p. 47.

3. In view of the cases that you have read, what can you suggest as guiding considerations for the worker's part in helping people to self-knowledge? Note such points of danger as—

The risk of "prying into privacies";

The difficulty of preserving a problem attitude rather than a blame attitude where the client is doing "wrong";

The difficulty of drawing the line between helpful self-knowledge and morbid introspection.

4. If we did not have social work, seeking a "neighborhood spread" in helping people to more effective living, what other institutions could fill its place in helping the Mrs. Kennys and the Mr. Snyders of the community to the understandings which they need?
5. What possibilities can you suggest of developing the part of *foster mothers* as carriers of "educational spread" between case work and their respective neighborhoods?
6. What effects on the Girl Scouts as an institution might appear if "problem girls," like Elizabeth Kenny, are placed in them as part of case workers' plans for helping their clients?
7. In what respects, if any, should the tests of success for a public welfare department differ from those for a private family welfare or child-placing society? Why? Cf. the following, quoted from a letter by Aubrey Williams, Deputy Administrator WPA, by Josephine C. Brown, "Government and Social Work" (*Survey*, March, 1936):

"Many people who claim to be advocates of public welfare really want to establish private social work on the payrolls of the government. To my way of thinking that is neither possible nor desirable. Public social work must be done in the arena of elected officials. . . . It must be willing to subject itself to public scrutiny . . . and this public scrutiny will undoubtedly involve frequent turnovers and cleansings and even the reverse of cleansings at times; but the same applies to all our other public institutions."

CHAPTER III

JUST WHAT IS THE CASE WORKER'S "CASE"?

Looked at uncritically, social case work appears simply as an art of helping people out of difficulties—an art which demands of the worker a knowledge of community resources and a measure of neighborly good sense and tact but no special scientific envisagement of the matters before her, such as a doctor has of his "cases." But once she is placed in the daily flow of problems for which her agency assumes responsibility, she meets demands for a power to see the *scope* of this responsibility, in order that she may judge (1) *how far* her "treatment" efforts should *reach out* among people in touch with each difficulty? and (2) *how long* her efforts with each should *continue*? Simple as these questions sound, their answering takes the worker into the field of social science, where the causes and cures of difficulties require some competency in clear thinking.

We can see why it is that these questions of outreach and continuance tax one's mental grasp, if we note that the tests of success in a "case," as we applied them in Chapter II, all look toward some *self-continuing* (as against agency-managed) *process* of betterment as the outcome of the worker's endeavors. The process may be narrowly conceived as a personal readjustment of the client, or more widely conceived as a desirable spread of bettered relation-

ships and practices in the community, but however conceived, it is expected to mobilize *such* persons, arrangements, and influences *as will keep the achieved betterments at least going if not growing* after the worker withdraws. Now it is often not at all self-evident *what range* of persons, arrangements and influences needs to be drawn into the case, nor *how long* the worker needs to stay on as the "mobilizer" of their remedial interplay. One may observe that as compared with her a doctor can more easily answer these questions as applying to a medical case. The betterment he is seeking usually displays itself as self-stabilized when the patient's bodily processes are functioning normally. This tells the doctor *how long* to continue on the case. The question *what range* of persons, arrangements, and influences should in the meantime be drawn into it is not so simple—as the development of *medical-social* work bears witness—but comparatively speaking the doctor can treat the patient as comprising within himself and his resources the conditions for betterment in health. The case worker, on the other hand, is seeking a betterment within a less self-defining field of control. The process of betterment is one in which many interrelating factors must conspire. It requires as objects of attention the attitudes of relatives, foster parents, employers, companions, as well as those of the person who is figuring as "the client." And her part in it does not often show itself as completed by a fulfilment that "closes the case" with "the difficulty solved." She must judge *when* the whole complex web of persons and circumstances has become enough stably ameliorative to allow her to transfer her agency's services to the next case waiting.

NEEDED: A UNIT OF ATTENTION

All this means that the worker on any "case" is intellectually in need of a *unit of attention*. The recognition of such a need becomes apparent when leaders in social work try to say just what is the *focus* of the worker's concern. Their statements refer to the end-results of self-sustained "adjustments" as results which in the meantime she must help to *develop* either—

- (1) In the client, as
 - (a) By solving a "personality problem," or
 - (b) By amending an untoward environment; or—
- (2) In a client group or "situation."

As thus tabulated the alternatives are made too sharp and mutually excluding, but they help us to see the differences of emphasis which have appeared in certain authoritative efforts to define what the case worker is watching.

For Mary E. Richmond, in *What Is Social Case Work?* (1922), the best intensive practice seemed to converge "toward the development of personality." Case work she defined as consisting "of those processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously effected, individual by individual, between men and their social environments." Here the focus of concern is plainly an individual person and *his* development. Not that Miss Richmond was unmindful of things to be done with the setting. Quoting from Henry James the remark that *relations stop nowhere*, and the literary artist has to draw, "by a geometry of his own the circle within which they shall happily *appear to do so*," she applies it to the case worker's need of deciding what, within the client's field of relationships, to understand and utilize, and what to neglect. Yet

the social environment is dealt with as something *through* which an "indirect approach" is made to the client, whose adjustment is being sought.¹

Seven years later, in "A Report of the Milford Conference" we read:

"Social case work deals with *the human being*, whose capacity to organize his own normal social activities may be impaired;" and again: "The ultimate goal [of social case work] is to develop in *the individual* the fullest capacity for self-maintenance in a social group."²

Here again attention focuses on the individual client, on his "capacity to adapt," with his setting implicated to be sure, yet not forming with the client a unitary field of effort. A second Milford Conference, however, (December 1932) definitely recognizes individual and environment as forming "two poles of interest" within the case, and sees the process of adaptation as "a dynamic interaction between the two." Thus viewed the worker is seen as dealing with a "personal-environmental *situation*." At times, indeed, a worker with some knowledge of modern psychiatry may make a conscious use of her own relationship with the client to deal with emotional attitudes, but "case work where the emphasis is strongly on this relationship is relatively rare." More characteristically she contributes—in contrast to the specialist in health, schooling, etc.—a view of the "total situation," envisaging "many foci of difficulty" within one frame of reference.³

¹ Pp. 98-121.

² Social Case Work, *Generic and Specific*. Published by the American Association of Social Workers, 1929. Italics not in the original.

³ See the summary report on this conference by Bertha C. Reynolds in *The Family*, February 1933, pp. 336 ff.

THE "SITUATION" AS THE UNIT OF ATTENTION

The term "situation" as it thus begins to appear in current discussions is due to take on new meanings. Heretofore, when the case worker has spoken of a "situation," she has used the word in its lay sense as covering vaguely things in the client's life that are happening at any one time and that have a felt relation with each other. Today, when she speaks of inquiring into, or of handling, a client's situation, she is coming to conceive a definite web of elements, current and past, that reveal and explain his present need in its wider bearings. Her unit of treatment has become a dynamic field of experience, a field in which the individual or the family figures within an aggregate of interactive and interdependent factors of personality and circumstance. Her thinking grows less client-centered.

Her trend toward thus envisaging a situation-unit seems to have been impelled by a growing sense of inadequacy in the personality-centered picture of her case. The latter way of viewing it seems, it is true, to be the more obvious way, the way more in accord with our moralized habits in thinking about people and their experiences. When the case, for example, is that of a breadwinner out of a job, our view of it naturally puts him at the focus. He it is (or his wife) whose distress of mind perhaps impels the initial step of approaching the agency. It is *his* children whose food and clothes are running short. We naturally think of *his* rent, *his* employer, the scarcity of *his* sort of work, and if *his* idleness has demoralizing effects on *him*, we have something of a personality-problem to reckon with. Even if we call it a "need situation," we think of it as *his* situation, with *his* needs as dictating our treatment procedures. Natu-

ral as this way of thinking is, it is increasingly felt to somewhat warp the picture in ways that over-magnify some factors and under-register others. It tends to slight the more indirect approaches to conduct-problems, to lose the perspective among social values that are at stake—some of which are not the less urgent for being only quiescent in the situation.

Nevertheless, when social case work is most intelligent and most thorough, the worker does deal with whole situations rather than with individuals or even families. Witness a report from a leading Child Guidance Clinic in which the writers state that in helping problem children they put much time and thought into furthering adjustments "on the part of brothers and sisters, friends, officials, and other persons occupying positions of influence and authority with respect to the children."⁴ When this Clinic spent many hours enlightening a school principal, a teacher, and others as to the nature of a problem-boy's needs and the possibilities for meeting them, what they sought was a reshaping of the situation in which the child was placed; they were making their treatment unit a segment of experience, and not alone a child.

THE "CASE" AS VIEWED IN "SITUATION-UNITS"

The unit of attention which seems thus to be recognized must of course justify itself by the things which it helps the worker to see. The situation-idea represents a way of viewing a "case" that brings out more clearly those aspects and elements which make its cooperative betterment something compassable by definitely implicated persons within

⁴ Porter Lee and Marian Kenworthy, *Mental Hygiene and Social Work*, p. iii.

the course of a definable social process. This means that we must say what *kinds* of aspect the idea stands for. Briefly, the distinctive aspects of a case-situation are four:

- (1) Its *content*: namely—
The fact-items seen within it
—depending on the scientific level of one's scrutiny;
- (2) Its *scope*: namely—
The range of its outreach among persons and circumstances;
The time spanned by its development;
- (3) Its "*pattern*," or the way its distinctive factors are organized;
- (4) Its *process*, or the course of significant change in the persons and circumstances involved.

Each of these aspects may be explained further, with illustration.

1. *Content of the Unit*

In any situation, say, that of a family with breadwinners out of work, one might ask first, Just what fact-items disclose themselves to our inspection as relevant to the "case," and what fade out as irrelevant? For the facts of the situation, just as accessible facts, are numberless. Among them, for instance, are the health, abilities, interests, affiliations, attitudes of the members of the family group concerned; the industrial demand for a certain grade of skill, the seasonal employment in a trade, the rules affecting the man's standing in a labor union, the local employment bureaus, relief agencies, and so on. Any of these, in any measure that they bear on the social values that are put in hazard by the family need become the *content* of the situation because they figure in a reshaping development. Once the social

agency establishes its cooperative relationship, a *social purpose* becomes implicit in the way all parties to the problem of betterment give heed to the matters before them. It is not any one person's purpose, nor is it indeed a "purpose" at all in the sense of a specific intended outcome. It is rather an awareness of values that depend for their fulfilment on a course of adjustment in certain attitudes. As such it lights up, within the situation, those factors which can be managed as operative items in a process of controlled change. Many items, *imaginably relevant*, are not actually so *thought* unless they can be seen as figuring in a cooperatively directed social process.

What the worker can see as "content" in the situation before her depends of course on what she has been trained to recognize. Her vision may catch only items that fall in with conventional and uncritical interpretations. Or it may penetrate to psychological and social factors which appear only to an observer scientifically schooled to discern such things.

2. *Scope of the Unit*

Besides its content—what we *see* in the situation—we need to observe its *scope*—which means *how far out we must look* in order to get all its factors included. Here we must differentiate between the "total" situation and the more immediate operative situation. By "operative" we mean "inclusive of those factors which are taken into account in handling the case." The term delimits the range of interactive items that must enter into a course of planned action. In the case of a family with breadwinners out of work, the operative situation would include relationships

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and resources among the immediate family, collateral relatives and friends, the man's last employer, the labor union, the church, and other social affiliations.

Behind the closer range of factors thus operatively included lies the cultural and institutional setting of our common life. Various factors within the immediate situation of the jobless family group may be conditioned by outlying changes in housing laws, school policies, health education, by the coming of new inventions, by industrial or political ups and down, race and population shifts, etc. An agency would not ordinarily make use of such remote connections in meeting the needs of the case. Yet if the father were semi-skilled the worker might turn to account any circumstances affecting the demand for his grade of skill in near-by industries. The bounds of the operative situation thus expand and contract as the action advances.

If the content and scope of the situation are defined by a socially developing purpose, then as that "purpose" becomes fulfilled or frustrated the given situation moves on into a succeeding and somewhat different one. The "situation" thus has a time-span. In the case just spoken of when the joint purpose of shaping the course of family affairs to a self-sustaining basis becomes frustrated by the man's ill-health, the first situation within which the operative factors were mainly economic, shifts into a second, within which the problem has become mainly medical. The actual time that is spanned by an operative situation is determined by the fortunes of its *development*. It is long or short according to the working out of a socially-conceived process—a process that may take days, weeks, or even many months.

A corroboration of this mode of thinking as applied

socially may be gathered from psychology. Writing of perception Professor R. M. Ogden says: "If time . . . is not the safest guide in the analysis of experience, then the conception of a circuit in which a want is satisfied is perhaps a truer description of adjustment." ⁵ Professor Ogden is discussing the content of what we see or hear, what a sense-organ gives us as a unit of experience. Taken in this detached way, however, his statement would appropriately apply to situation-process as a unit of thinking in social case work. This marking off of integratively grouped factors out of the continuum of a client's living, then, is for purposes of thinking, and must justify itself by the quality of thought it sets going. "The criterion of a good descriptive concept," says Koffka,—“is just this, that new facts and their functions are revealed by it.” ⁶

A further distinction in "situation-thinking" seems called for in case work. The factors that enter into the client's operative situation fall largely under such categories as health, income, living conditions, occupation, schooling, recreation, family relationships. A moment's thought will show that each of these aspects is itself a constellated unit made up of specially related fact-items, a *sub-situation*, defined in content by their tractability to a sub-purpose. For instance, our unemployed breadwinner is suffering from serious ill-health and has a wife and three small children. The operative situation might be phrased as that of a *family with a run-down breadwinner and no income*, the activating purpose being to reinstate the family as a self-maintaining group. The sub-situations may appear as follows: *Its depleted health aspect* includes for the man poor

⁵ R. M. Ogden, *Psychology and Education*, p. 124.

⁶ Kurt Koffka, *The Growth of the Mind*, p. 18.

teeth and eyes, a question of tuberculosis, a history of under-vitality going back many years, intemperance resorted to for relief from physical discomfort; and for the children under-nourishment. Its *under-employment aspect* includes the man's irregular work due both to ill-health and to drinking, and the wife's plan to board the children and find a job herself. Its *family-relations aspect* includes the man's dependent attitude toward his mother who has always shielded and indulged him, and toward his wife who has a maternal attitude toward him, and who unites in herself father and mother rôles in the family; also the wife's more dutiful than affectionate attitude toward the children. Its *unsanitary home conditions aspect* includes the facts that the tenement the family occupy has one dark room, is dirty and untidy, that the wife appears too resigned to bad surroundings to try to better them, and that the man can escape to his mother's home at any time. These sub-situations correspond to what the Milford report calls "proximate goals." They are the case worker's immediate points of attack, looked at one by one. They envisage separate needs and point to the next steps to be taken in meeting them. The operative situation, as a complex whole, is made tractable to treatment by concerted advances toward these "proximate goals."

Sub-situations, then, are inter-knit. The man's poor health interferes with work; his unemployment makes for under-nourishment; his resulting inadequacy encourages his own attitude of dependence and the indulgence of the two women; their indulgence leaves the son and husband minus a spur to work, while the situation as a whole evidently discourages any house-keeping ambitions in the wife. These inter-connections among the sub-situations

illustrate the fact that the operative situation is not a mere sum of factors, but is a whole composed of causally interactive parts.

Where such is the case a change at any point makes a change in the whole operative field. For instance, it is hardly necessary to point out the complete shift of purpose that would take place if the man in the above illustration improved in health or if his wife gave up her plan to go to work. As a matter of fact these two changes were actually brought about, the second of them having more effect upon the situation than the first, because the man's improvement in health was but slight. It is in the way that a change in one sub-situation realigns the whole that the case worker opens up new insights and resources. The wife's decision to keep a home going meant that the immediate concern, instead of being that of placing out three undernourished children, became that of securing an income till the husband could be got into working condition. That one change in the woman's plan changed the operative situation by changing the family's need. The next step the agency took was to secure an income through relief sources. Apparently this change made things look more hopeful to the wife, for she shortly agreed to move to a better tenement. The change to liveable surroundings stirred her ambition, so that whereas her home had been neglected, her rooms were now kept clean, and she developed an unsuspected knack for making a house cosy and attractive at slight expense. This certainly has brought the situation to a new posture of affairs. In the course of its "circuit" it has shown sub-situations as work-units, changes within which have moved the whole toward a socially desirable fulfilment.

3. *Pattern of the Unit*

In the foregoing illustration the phrase *family with a run-down breadwinner and no income* was used to characterize the situation as a whole. The factors of ill-health and the lack of income stand out as being constantly interactive and as having a major influence on the development of this family's affairs. The same type of situation will appear in many a family that comes to the attention of case-work agencies. In other words, there is a similarity between this family situation and others. While it is true that no case, looked at in all its detail, would ever be duplicated, yet the experienced worker will note in the case that comes before her today certain basic inter-relating factors that bear an important resemblance to those in some family she dealt with a week or a month ago. Within the complex situation-unit she finds certain factors taking on a major significance as more closely and persistently interactive than others, and recurrent as such in other situations. Such recurrent or type-identifying factors come definitely configured in *situation-patterns*.

The importance of identifying such basic patterns is that it helps us (1) in following the social process as a complicated case develops, and (2) in recognizing *type* likenesses between situations that occur at diverse times and places.

By way of illustrating this basic patterning of the situation and what we may expect from identifying it, let us consider three cases from family life.

The first is that of a Polish family, in which the husband and father, though fairly skilled and steady as a worker, kept his wife and children on the smallest of

budgets. He would bring home especially good food which he required his wife to cook for himself alone, while she and the children were having hardly enough to satisfy hunger. He kept one room in their tenement cosily fitted up where he could spend the evening, across the threshold of which neither mother nor children should venture without permission; the rest of the home was left uncomfortable and cheerless, containing only the barest necessities for living. The children were occasioning the mother anxiety, both as to their health and their behavior, the oldest boy already showing a desire to stay away from home, and taking an arrogant attitude toward his sisters. This family was kept in outward subjection through fear of the man's ungoverned temper. They had no affection for him.

All these factors of attitude and circumstance come to focus around three points: (1) the man-centered organization of the family program; (2) a husband and father's preoccupation with his personal comfort under the home roof; (3) a growing sense of neglect among the subordinated home partners. The pattern subtended between these three points we may designate as that of *home as a cushioned retreat for the man*.

The second family are of Yankee extraction. The man being presentable and having good abilities and education, gets positions readily and often with an excellent salary. When in cash he provides himself with finely tailored clothes, a modish car, joins a club, and so on. He is a gambler and once used money that belonged to his firm. He loses his position through irresponsibility, leaves town with debts, and having reached the bottom has to start over again. The wife then goes to work. Even when in funds

he has made her so meagre an allowance that only by the most capable management, making over and going without clothes, pinching at every turn, have she and the child kept along at all. He tells this intelligent homemaker nothing of his affairs, consults her about none of their roving from city to city. Being amiable, however, he has retained the affections of a woman who has aimed to help him, but who, after eight years of patient acceptance of her lot, has reached a point where she feels she must take some step to better conditions for herself and five-year-old child. The husband likes to figure as a man-about-town. At the same time, he keeps his home going, and right along has taken his wife and child with him on all his wanderings. Evidently he gets satisfaction from his wife's capable management, from the cheerful home arrangements, and from the sense of security this gives him.

In this family, too, though of different race, background, education, and manners from the previous one, we have again the basic pattern. The family program is man-centered; the man has resources for outside pleasures, but he counts on home both for comfort and for refuge.

Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in.

Finally, the other partners have developed attitudes of self-defense and strain.

For the third family situation we may turn to the recently published diary of Cosima Wagner. She and her husband being exceptionally endowed persons with a public status, their relationship is the more complex. Richard Wagner's home life was shielded at every turn by his wife's loving care. Worshipping his genius, Cosima adapted her-

self and her household to his wishes and whims without question, upheld his confidence in himself with unswerving faith and admiration, and bore with patience a high-strung irritability which his affection could not control. But this is only part of the story. Cosima did much more than pad her husband's home life. As Liszt's daughter she brought a trained musical intelligence into the conversations of the Wagner family circle. Their relations increasingly brought her own powers into full play, so that her dealings with her husband approached that of partnership.

This family and the two preceding ones may seem to belong to different worlds. The Wagners' gifts, their cultivation, their milieu of artists, their creative purpose which they held against obstacles and discouragements, their brilliant achievement, all seem to remove their experiences from those of the humble folk that seek aid from case-work agencies. Nevertheless, in the family life of these distinguished persons we find the same situation-pattern:—that of *home as a cushioned retreat for the man*.

A recognition of this pattern helps one to see that in all of these instances the woman's attitude, quite as much as the man's, goes to the making of the home problem that results. These complementary attitudes are group-sanctioned, with their roots partly in sex difference and partly in the division of labor by which the man supports the family through work outside, while the woman does her share within the home. These conditioning factors of course figure in the special pattern we have identified. The home life of the breadwinner becomes man-centered in order to conserve his strength for a work life that is job-centered; his personal comfort takes on an institutional

claim; and his partners develop attitudes of self-defense against the general subordination of their needs to his wishes. The constancy of the pattern thus displayed invites attention to the points at which differences of circumstance and response make for diverse developments.

The Polish home was a cushioned retreat for the man's physical needs and those alone. There was here little promise of happy developments between the two adults and four children. The wife too much feared her husband's temper to get on terms such that they could talk out their joint problems, and he apparently felt no need for it. Instead, the family experience had become a mere repetition of the same sort of incident, piling up suppressed resentments on one side and feeding raw egoism on the other. The man seemed likely to go on taking as nearly all as he could for himself, and the woman and children to acquiesce through fear—a stalled situation. When the wife finally mustered initiative to face and deal with the problem, her proposed solution was to secure a separation with maintenance. Her own one-sided “treatment purpose,” as you might call it, was that of escape from a situation beyond her control.

In the second instance home afforded the man the same physical comforts he allowed his wife and child, with in addition a loyal and patient affection, and an efficient backer whenever he reached the end of his rope. Here seemed to be more promise of constancy in the family relations. The wife came to recognize that she had perhaps failed in being too forgiving, too patient, and that a franker and firmer attitude toward her husband might have helped him more. Encouraged by talking with an understanding worker, she gave up what had been her purpose of leaving him, of

escaping from her problem, and undertook to get on frank terms with him. The husband and wife discussed their joint problems from the point of view of the mother and child as well as of the man, and the woman showed him what would happen if his irresponsibility as breadwinner continued. Granting that this man's relations outside the home probably also needed reshaping, nevertheless a step was taken toward changing a stalled situation into one that might develop. For the first time these two people had united in defining the situation before them as one to be jointly solved.

In the case of Richard Wagner, home afforded physical comforts, and, of even greater importance, the peace and reassurance craved by an artist long unappreciated, and the devoted and self-effacing partnership of a gifted woman. Here is a situation satisfying in some respects and not in others. Where it afforded a true partnership, with Cosima utilizing her abilities and insights, the relationships which it framed between these two people and their setting were progressive, moving from one level of mutual stimulus to another. Where Cosima suppressed justly wounded feelings, confiding them to her diary because she could not let her husband see the pain his hypersensitiveness had caused her, the relationship became one of unshared points of view, a relation partaking of that between mother and child, in other words, over-maternal. Whether it could have been made less so without sacrificing something of the creative energies of a genius does not alter the quality of the relationship that resulted.

The identifying of a pattern that is relatively constant helps us to bring order into our thinking about the variables which appear. It should clarify causative relations, should

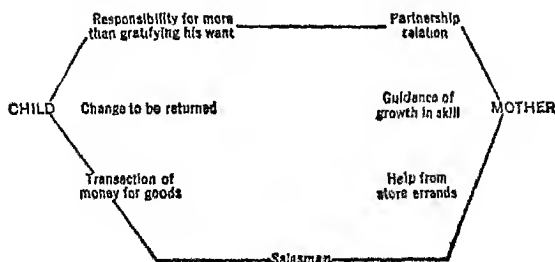
help us to follow social process, and to raise significant questions. Even the three cases here mentioned are enough to make us ask what are the conditions under which this group-sanctioned value, *home as a cushioned retreat for the man*, gets realized with happiness and growth for all concerned, and what the conditions under which it gets realized only through a thwarting of other family values? The answer could be sought through a study of other situations defined by the same dynamic pattern.

4. *Process within the Unit*

Within the situation the most significant *development* is that of a successful or unsuccessful maturing in the formative relations between the client, the circumstances, and other people involved. To mental hygienists the conception of maturing is apt to be that of growth within the individual, a growth in adequacy of response, untrammelled by egoistic impulses, emotional thwarts, and limited awareness of what is involved. To social workers it will be that of a growth taking place in the *relations* between two or more persons and their setting—a mutual process. It may be said to take place in social relations when each of those concerned contributes his special sensitivity and point of view to the adequate defining and handling of a joint situation in such a way that all parties to it achieve responses within its pattern that are more sensitively adequate, integrated, and outreaching toward emergent values.

Let us illustrate this by discussing a mother and a child's progress in relations that involved the use of money. The essential patterning might be termed that of *child apprenticeship in home economics*.

First we have the mother sending her little four-year-old with five cents to buy an ice-cream cone. Each time as he reaches up his coin to the salesman he dutifully asks, "Is there any change?" Six years later she is sending him to the market for peas. This time he exercises a choice and brings home beans, because the salesman said that the latter, which were cheaper, were very fresh. The advance between mother, child, and salesman is from a situation which the mother defines for the child and the child simply accepts, to one where the child finds and brings in relevant facts—about the peas and the beans—of which the mother had not known, and the salesman treats him as an agent exercising discretion. Even the first situation, however, exhibited a simple patterning of factors—coin, street-dangers, drug-store, salesman, cone, changing of money—shaped by the mother's desire that the child have the sweets he wants, and that he come to know the meaning and responsible use of money. The child was acquiring in common with his mother a set of experiences outside the home, against which and in relation with which to see and evaluate the more intimate experiences within the home. The following diagram may make clear the values enmeshed in this situational pattern:



At the second stage the boy, in departing from his mother's orders, gave evidence that they had moved further in their money relations. He related the price of commodities to his mother's budget; his responsible choice, and his purposive talk with the salesman displayed a grasp of the relation between store, salesman, prices, home needs, and parents. Here was not only an expanding background of shared experience but a contribution to the defining of a money situation by getting and using new knowledge.

At fifteen this boy is trusted with the planning and developing of some definite part of the home economic activity—raising vegetables as a contribution to the family budget. Under advice, he gets from the library books or perhaps government pamphlets on soils, drainage, exposure, and discusses with a nurseryman the price and quality of seeds, tools, fertilizers. He then goes over his plans with his parents. In addition to the gardening information he has gleaned, he knows the demands of his school work and feels the sacrifices involved in foregoing High School pastimes. The parents, on the other hand, appreciate more fully than the boy what a waste of the money put into materials will mean to their budget should the garden fail through neglect; and may, because of their knowledge of the folk-ways of their community, be alive to dangers of overstressed play activities by young people in their 'teens. Parents and son, then, equally contribute to a grasp of the various factors bearing on the plan—of the situation, in short, bringing social pleasures and garden needs into such relations that the values involved are reconciled and the boy gets adequate companionship while the family garden thrives.

The mutual maturing framed within these relationships

takes from their patterning certain elements that make for its continuance. It sustains the joint thinking by which the group finds ways of meeting the conflicting claims of pleasure and earning, with the older people gaining in sensitivity to what youth feels, and the boy in awareness of what home comfort costs. The elders do not merely "get the boy's point of view," nor merely acquire ideas about the conditions under which friends are made at school. Nor does the boy merely take over parental ideas as to sociabilities. The change, in short, is not merely quantitative; the very quality of their attitudes is continually modified. Their desire to have the boy socially "in the swim" becomes infused with a growing perception all round that their status feelings may find more valid grounds than the prejudices and conventions of his High School set. The further maturing of the attitudes thus enwebbed within this "apprenticeship patterning" of the home economic interests involves the home group in responses to outside persons and agencies—to agriculturists, distributors, technical journals—until it establishes the boy's "money-activities" as a part of the on-going production and exchange of the economic world.

In the three phases of this example a worker whose view was personality-centered would have attended only to the maturing of the boy. Naturally the boy, starting as a four-year-old, had the farthest to go in achieving full effectiveness in his responses. His rate of change was rapid and dramatic. Yet the maturing process was none the less a group process. It involved the sensitizing all round of parents, boy, salesman, friends, to values implicit in this pattern of relationships and experience. All gained by the special sensitivity and point of view of each—their re-

sponses growing more discriminating, appropriate, and sure as their attitudes became integratively adjusted to the growing demands of the situation. The marked changes in the boy's growth simply gives what Professor Child would call a distinctive *gradient*⁷ in this type of situation pattern.

This chapter began with the question: "Just what is the case worker's case"? Her first contact with it may seem to define it as the affair of a "client" with whom she undertakes to share her agency's resources in solving a personal problem. Her agency, however, represents a *social* concern with personal difficulties. Its responsibility in the matter makes the "case" something that must be defined in a way to determine just what it is responsible to work with, and for how long? This has brought us to the need of formulating certain definitions as aids to clear "case-thinking." We may summarize them as follows:

1. The unit of attention in a "case" is the "need situation," a segment of shared experience in which certain social values depend for their fulfilments upon cooperative developments between the persons and circumstances involved.
2. Its content and scope are determined by a socially developing purpose, with which the situation moves through a circuit of adjustive changes.
3. The situation comprises a set of operative factors—both of attitude and of circumstance—which invite the agency's directive concern. Beyond this "operative situation" is of course an underlying or environing zone of

⁷ C. M. Child, "The Individual and Environment from a Physiological Viewpoint." See Kimball Young, *Source Book for Social Psychology*, p. 197.

conditioning factors, which form the given "cultural situation."

4. The situation divides as it moves into "sub-situations" offering the "handles" with which to lay hold on its problem. Since a change in any one factor affects the dynamics of the whole, the progressive adjustments in sub-situations induce a measure of self-stabilizing in good results as they appear.

5. The factors of a situation which are most closely and persistently interactive and recur as such are definitely configured into relational patterns observable both from phase to phase of one case and as type patterns from case to case.

6. Desired changes within the formative relationships defined by the pattern often mean a maturing of attitude and response with respect to the factors, both constant and variable, that come into play. Maturing takes place when each party contributes his special sensitivity and point of view to the adequate envisaging and handling of a shared situation, in such wise that all parties to it achieve responses that are more sensitively appropriate, integrated, and out-reaching toward emergent values.

If, now, these ideas all stress a situation-centered as against a client-centered way of viewing the case, we want to know how it affects the way a case worker views the individual person. This will be the theme of our next chapter.

EXERCISE

Read the following sketch of an approach to the study of "Conditioning Patterns in the Family Circle" ⁸ and then work out the exercise that follows it.

⁸ By the present writer in *Social Forces*, June, 1930.

"An approach to our appraisal of family success may well be made through the scrutiny of certain basic patterns in family situations. These situation-patterns, appearing in the course of the joint life of man, woman, and children, should be thought of as moving phase by phase from the early adjustments of marriage, through the coming and rearing of children, to the readjustments involved as children reach their independence. Passing one into another by gradual changes, these phases should each mean an advance from one level of inter-relationships within the family group to a new level of enriching personal potentialities. Successful family life is recognizable where we can see a cycle of growth in the interests that are fostered in a family circle.

"Let us look at two or three such situation-patterns. First there is the period of adjustment between a man and a woman during the early months of marriage when they are 'in love.' This phase is characterized by an intimate sharing of emotional experience that makes for an enlargement of personal outreach—*makes for it*, we say, since the enlargement does not inevitably follow. In-loveness, ordinarily regarded as a simple enmeshment in sex attraction, involves in itself also a mixture of gratified ego. To be the supreme centre of interest to another person is one of the most flattering experiences life offers. Where two people seek, however, to keep up their mutual expression on a candy-and-flowers level, their devotion tends in point of beauty and poetry, to grow stale. If their love is to last, it must mature; it must grow and expand through a sharing of common interests of a vital sort. This first type of situation must progress into a second type.

"A second patterning of their situation appears with the coming of children, when another interest competes with the absorption of the young couple in each other. With time a still further interest—the man's work—comes to bulk largely in his thought. The problem of maintaining a mutuality of interest becomes more complex. The usual interest on which the two join is the children and the bettering of the home. This may develop into a shared concern with their complementary rôles as homebuilders, or it may get stalled as merely two

people caring separately for the same thing. In certain divorce suits, for example, where husband and wife each seek custody of the children, one gets an impression that the child has not been a shared interest, but has merely afforded each party an egoistic claim for the same satisfaction. The maturing of relations on this level begins to demand of man and wife a social imagination that encompasses a fuller pattern of values and activities than appeared at the first level.

"A concrete illustration may make clearer the idea of family situations moving from one level to another. Here is a young man and wife, both personally attractive and both in love. She is intelligent and capable, before marriage a successful saleswoman, whereas he, though a steady worker, can command but a small wage. His earning capacity, moreover, is distinctly less than that of his own brothers and sisters, all of whom are prosperous working people. The wage he earns however is sufficient to keep two people, and the couple get along happily on the mating level. As children come the situation changes. Increased expenses make the shortage in his earnings more apparent. He cannot seem to reconcile himself to a drop in living standards—in status—from those of his own kin; he is dissatisfied with the only grade of position he has ability to fill, and in short appears beset by a sense of inadequacy. The securing of occasional work by the wife seems only to humiliate him further, and in spite of the fact that he and she have all along found each other attractive he has turned again and again to fresh love adventures.

"Granting that we should know more of what bears on the relation between this man and woman, we may at least query whether one element in their problem is not the husband's desire to hold on to an 'in-love' relation as a compensating experience to his ill-success at work. For this or for other reasons a man, a wife, or both may desire what is sometimes called 'staying young,' but which actually means maintaining a static, and hence atrophying, love relation. They fail to move on to a level in which their affection expands to include shared interests with social outreach. This surely marks a recurring, an only too familiar family situation.

"A second case shows a similar family pattern in which the relationships undergo a superficially favorable development without achieving a real advance toward a maturer level. The man is equally unsuccessful at his work and has a corresponding sense of inadequacy. As in the first case, though a steady worker, he commands only small pay, whereas his wife is exceedingly capable and a good earner—when she can leave home to work. The two situations differ in that the second woman is strongly maternal. Shortly after marriage she recognized her husband's need for constant praise and reassurance of manhood. She has taken a tolerant attitude toward him, hardly treating him as an adult with a man's responsibility, and helping him to a sense of accomplishment in every small way she can devise. This man has remained constant to his wife, and their family life has on the whole been happy and conventionally 'successful.' Yet it is evident that this second husband is not in a maturing family experience. Like the first man he is remaining in relationships which keep him juvenile in certain important aspects. To a degree these parents have shared in training their children and planning for them, yet always with the mother carrying the heavy end of their joint responsibility while pretending to keep him figuring as the head of the house. The total pattern of family activities and sentiments is manifestly affected by this. Here is harmony, but do we find *success* in such an arrested family situation with its more or less stunting consequences for father, mother and children?

"A third type of arrested family situation may appear as children mature. To illustrate: A father of boys and girls in their 'teens has become absorbed in his work, too tired at night for ready companionship with younger minds whose interests are different from his own. The mother, alone in her influence with her children, has come to enjoy a sense of importance in her own domain comparable to her husband's in the domain of business. Moreover both parents have so conventionalized a conception of child-training as to have recognized few challenging problems to be thought out together, their desires for the young people having been mainly that at home they should

not be annoying and abroad they should conform to the mores of their social class. Today at a critical stage in their development the mother is making far-reaching decisions as to their friendships, leisure activities, and vocation without help from the father's experience. The latter is simply an amiable provider. So far as concerns his outstanding common interest with his wife—that of their nearly-grown children, the father gets his knowledge at second-hand. He sees his children and all their affairs through their mother's eyes. Here the whole family pattern is thrown askew by the one-centred parental influence. Each member of the circle is the poorer for missing the father's part in that continuous appraisal of values that makes the family a seed-ground of worth-while interests. The loss is not simply in the influence and sentiments that should centre in the father-relationships but in the preparation which should now begin between the man and wife for a new marital level, as the maturing children pass out from a home-centred to a more socially-centred phase—from the level of child-rearing to the level of interest-building.

"There are, then, basic patternings in family situations which affect successful advance to levels of maturity in family relations. In all three of the cases instanced the family pattern is skewed by a feature of the father's provider relation—a relation that reaches outside of the family circle. These patternings might be summed up as follows:

"*Case 1*, from the point of view of the family as an institution, is at the *mating* level; psychologically the man is kept at the *falling-in-love* level by a need of emotional experiences that gratify his self-potency which is impaired by his low earning power. The patterning might be called *in-loveness as inadequate mating*.

"*Case 2* is institutionally at the *home-building* level; psychologically the group is estopped from developing perceptive fact-facing attitudes towards their interrelations by a family 'cotton-wool' conspiracy to soften the father's sense of inadequacy. This patterning might be called *sterile cotton-wool harmony*.

"*Case 3* institutionally is at the *interest-building* level; psy-

chologically the pattern is warped by the aloofness of the father—absorbed in his business. Family relations suffer in that: (1) a mature man's point of view is not figuring in the problems of young adulthood; (2) new interests and shared activities are not developing between man and wife to replace those of the home-building phase which is nearly completed. This patterning we might call that of *home as the business man's filling station*.

"If these illustrations have served their purpose they will suggest that in forming our concepts of 'success' in family-life, we should concern ourselves not alone with special attitudes in individuals—such as inadequacy-feelings, a desire for importance, a maternal trend, and so on—but with the total pattern of attitudes and personal-social outreach that characterizes each family situation as a phase of successful or unsuccessful growth. Our interest would thus stress all that goes on *between* man and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters and between them and their circumstances in progressive configurations of interest-building elements."

Take a given family situation from your reading⁹ or from your personal knowledge and make out for it—

- (1) A *descriptive summary* of it, such as is made for the three illustrative cases in the preceding sketch.
- (2) A *characterization* of it as a psycho-social pattern—such a characterization as the three at the end of the sketch, except that it should be fuller as to the specific *attitudes* now displayed. Cf. the analysis on p. 201 f.

Typical family situations for this purpose are here suggested:

At marriage

Money-spending adjustments

Adjustments to claims and expectations of "in-laws" or of close friends

⁹ Family situations reported in social case histories may be found in Harriet R. Mowrer's *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord*, and in Sophonisba Breckinridge's *Selected Case Records* already referred to.

WHAT IS THE CASE WORKER'S "CASE"? 103

Wife's home-making tastes and aptitudes

—Status implications of household furnishings and of home habits

When babies come (2nd to about 8th year)

Man's attitudes toward care and training of babies

—How get beyond "toy" attitudes?

Woman's home-bound isolation: intellectually dropping behind

Domestic circle (9th to about 14th year)

Need of common interests to replace waning sex-appeal

Training of children

—Home-school-work-play relationships

—Overrunning of parents by children

Parent and young adult developments (15th to 20th year)

Wife's renewal of outside interests

Problems of favoritisms and jealousies in parent-son-daughter attachments

Guidance of boy-girl relations outside the home

Vocational decisions

CHAPTER IV

THE CASE WORKER'S VIEW OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Dealing as she does with persons in "need situations," the case worker looks at individuals with certain ideas in mind which guide her attention to things which are important for the kind of personal help which a social agency is prepared to give. Just as a doctor has his own kind of assumptions and expectations in looking at a patient, a clergyman his in looking at a parishioner, and a teacher his in looking at a student, so the case worker has hers in looking at the person whose special needs and circumstances have put him in the present rôle of a client. Chief among these assumptions and expectations is that of the *possibilities of growth* that lie, not just within the client as a "personality," but within the *relationships* which project his life into enriching experiences shared with other lives.

This idea of a person's "growth potentiality" requires a little care in stating. Basically it is the biological idea that a living organism accumulates within itself the forms of its past experiences as patterns for future experiences. At the level of man such mental experiences as those, say, of friendship, of the solution of problems, are, as Professor Montague puts it, "psychic food." They are "assimilated and added as increments to the substance of the self. Any object that will fulfill one of these potentialities, along

with whatever is instrumental to such fulfilment, *has value or is a value*," so that the attainment of values "constitutes an actual growth of one's very being."¹ The important patterns of experience, as the case worker sees them, are those which organize people's attitudes toward values. She sees that during childhood, youth, and succeeding years every individual passes through a succession of attitude-organizing experiences. The child reared in an Irish Catholic home will again and again experience situations similar as to their racial and religious value-aspects and as to the accepted attitudes toward these aspects; the child of orthodox Russian Jews will pass through parallel experiences with differences as to their constituent value-aspects. Within each child will grow a set of experience-patterns, a deposit from these recurring experiences, that he will bring to oncoming life-situations in the form of attitudes toward the values they present.

These patterns may take shape narrowly, in egoistic terms, or broadly, in social terms. A child, for instance, responds mainly to those aspects in a situation which affect his immediate and personal urges. But if his education steadily enlarges the outreach of what he responds to so that more and more he finds his satisfactions as integral with those of other persons, his experience takes forms which steadily become enriched, and his relationships mature. This learning, however, people attain in widely varying degrees. When a man's experience has continued in forms at a narrowly personal level, then he is sensitive only to such value-aspects in a *present* situation as seem to bear on his separate individual satisfactions. His material for growing, his psycho-social food, so to speak, is

¹ Wm. P. Montague, *Belief Unbound*, p. 32 f.

limited, and experience tends to be repetitive. On the other hand, if a man's experience has taken forms steadily broadening in their implied scope, then his attitudes dispose him favorably toward value-aspects in a present situation that are drawn from a wide and varied field of relatedness, and his "self" has an ever larger outreach.

In any experience the value-aspects that naturally do most to further the growth of the individual as a social being are the attitudes and points of view of other people, either singly or in groups. As Professor Allport puts it:

"Our social self really originates in our own efforts to establish opinions and attitudes regarding us in others. The traits and possessions which we ourselves value we desire to place in the foreground of the consciousness of others in their evaluation of us. We may succeed in this, or only imagine that we succeed; but in any case our social self is no mere passive reflection of us from the minds of others. It is a social projection of our own personal ideals and aims. Our behavior accordingly is reinforced in the same direction, and objective personality traits become ingrained more deeply in response to the attitudes we seek to make others assume toward us."²

Even when we speak of attitudes of people taken singly, we need to bear in mind that the persons involved in a situation, though separate as individuals, are nevertheless inter-related for the time being. For instance, where mother, father, teacher, social worker and psychiatrist are dealing with a child whose imperfect speech is handicapping his education, all these individuals have relations with each other, more or less close, through their common concern for the overcoming of this handicap. Each of them has past forms of experience which make him sensitive to

² Floyd H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Houghton Mifflin Company), p. 327. (Quoted by permission.)

somewhat distinctive value-aspects in the situation. The child himself may be sensitive as to his standing among his companions, the mother as to her rôle as a parent, both mother and father as to the boy's future success in life, the teacher as to such a child's possibilities in school, the psychiatrist as to likely causative factors, both physical and emotional. The case worker is trained to help each toward sharing the special sensitivities of the others and toward responding, as a consequence, to a wider scope of relatedness. The attitudes of these individuals may develop into a mutuality of influence upon the child, whose efforts to better his speech are strengthened by his wish to appear well in their eyes.

Of special importance in the case-worker's view are the contributions to growth that accrue to the individual as a member of social groups. From his family clan, his club associates, his work organization, his church, a man derives a variety of his personal value-reactions. These are what give him a sense of the more important objects and directions of effort, and the groups that share them both define the conditions under which he can win approving recognition and create the opportunities—in their manifold organized activities—for his achievement of satisfying social rôles. Moreover the group-held standards and sanctions which he thus assimilates not only direct, systematize, and stabilize his personal choices of aims but enrich the quality of his personal emotion, and extend it beyond possessive drives. This influence strikes so deep into our forms of experience that it is easily overlooked. It acts by making the satisfaction of one's personal desire and effort felt as interdependent with that of others, thus rendering these desires and satisfactions more meaningful. They take on a

social dimension. The fact that the "others" among whom experience is conditioned are a more or less defined group and not humanity in general brings their motivating influence within average powers of responsive imagination.

As an agency of personal growth the group enlists its members in definite processes of "evaluation." Its function here has been described as that of "socializing" those interests of persons and factions which otherwise would become ingrown or discordant:

"Every group must reach some practicable coordination of its common interest with the other individual interests of its members, and also with the common interests of other groups and with the individual interests of non-members. . . . Interests in themselves afford little or no guidance until they are clarified and stabilized by an estimate of their relative worth. Their rightfulness as guides of conduct depends upon their being viewed in their mutual effects upon one another, upon their being winnowed and selected, and upon their being brought into practicable harmony with one another."³

The group, therefore, develops the individual member by staging for him the processes by which values are compared, by making him aware of potentialities in himself as a participant in organized activities, by giving him a sense of status as one whose personal standards take forms which satisfy public opinion.

Deeper than these present patternings of group experience the social worker takes note of the social heritage—of the resources for individual growth that lie in the subsoil of our institutions. An institution differs from a group or association in that it is not a membership organized for the pursuit of common interests but is "the form

³ George H. Sabine and Walter J. Shepard. Introduction to H. Krabbe's *Modern Idea of the State*, pp. lxii-lxiii.

or order along which their activities are related and directed." ⁴ The neighborhood families and churches and the Retail Merchants' Federation are *associations*, but marriage, religious communion, and the business code are institutions. Their part in forming the mind of the individual has been well stated by Professor Hocking:

"An institution, like a law, has to meet two needs and not one only: it must be serviceable to society; it must also inform a groping individual what, according to racial experience or national experience, he wants, and hold him to that meaning. The institutions of property must make clear to him the completer sense of his acquisitive and grabbing instincts. The institutions of the family must interpret to him his instincts of sex and parenthood." ⁵

Where the association gives to personal experience its social dimensions, the institution gives it a *time*-dimension. Institutionalized values are those which our forbears have tested and found to yield the more durable satisfactions. They are also enriched by memories which give them the appeal of sentiment. What sentiment does for one's inner life is apparent to anyone who reflects on the emotional appeal of old hymns. Even where the words, if attended to, would arouse dissent as expressing group ideologies that are outmoded, the music reverberates with the voices of generations aspiring toward the Greater Good. The religious institution arises before the listener as a sounding-board for his own—perhaps faintly emergent—overtones of religious feeling. He gains an inner sense of identification: his personal life becoming continuous with a fellowship of the faithful moving out of the past into the future.

⁴ R. M. MacIver, *The Modern State*, p. 6.

⁵ Wm. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking* (Yale University Press), p. 211. (Quoted with the author's permission.)

THE INDIVIDUAL'S NEED OF HELP TOWARD
SOCIAL GROWTH

These facts as to the "growth potentialities" of people are important to the case worker for three reasons: (1) The whole community needs the attainment of social growth by *all* its members and not only by the more privileged. (2) The people who come to social agencies for help do not get *the fullest measure* of help unless they and others involved in their difficulties attain mature attitudes toward their common problems of relationship. Of course the client does not think of himself as coming to the agency because of a need for social growth—on his own part or on anybody else's. He comes because he is in trouble, and because he hasn't the resources which more privileged folk have for getting himself and his dependents out of trouble. But the solution of his trouble is not a real solution until it includes adjustments of feeling and gains in insight by which he and others become stably self-directing in their further relations. (3) These adjustments and gains by which a person grows do not take place of themselves without hitches, thwarts, and miscarriages. His potentialities of growth do not develop into achieved maturity without helps of various sorts from one quarter or another—helps to the mental processes involved in growing. The case worker, called into a need-situation, is thus inevitably placed at a point from which these processes can be facilitated. She is in a position to see the circumstances and the states of mind of all the parties to the situation; she can help people give attention to those aspects of the situation which will stimulate favorable reactions; and by her presence she naturally and acceptably supplies a *liaison* between

all the factors which in their right relationships will move and shape the present need-situation into one that makes for ongoing growth.

What are the special *kinds* of help that count in the maturing of people's relationships? One kind of help which the case worker can supply is to do clearer thinking than others are doing about the *possibilities of growth* in people. She can help a teacher or a foster mother to appreciate the difference between growth and *ability* in dealing with young persons. As Dr. Gesell puts it:

"Ability denotes a capacity to perform at a given level. Growth denotes a capacity to change in a constructive, progressive direction from one level of performance to another. This capacity is a form of plasticity which in post-adolescent years can only be measured by taking relatively long intervals of time into account. To say that a youth has attained a certain level of measured ability which represents his limit (call it limit X) is not defining his growth potency. Another youth may reach the same limiting level of ability but may exhibit markedly superior powers of assimilation in after years. Ability comes but wisdom lingers. Now wisdom comes slowly to the second youth, perhaps not at all to the first. This assimilative capacity is not a measurable ability in the ordinary sense; but it is a growth potency, a quantitative difference, of extreme dynamic importance which both common sense and psychology may insist upon."⁶

The assimilation of incoming experience—i. e., the relating of selected aspects of it to present values—takes place, as we have seen, within a circuit of mutual attitude-reorganizing processes. This situation-circuit, as defined by the socializing purposes involved, tends not only to become more inclusive in scope and content, but also toward a pro-

⁶ Arnold Gesell, *Infancy and Human Growth*, p. 13. (Quoted by permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.)

longing of the psychological tensions involved—a lengthening of the time-span required for a realizing of ends.

"Social action [including social work] continues the whole work of organic evolution by prolonging the 'vestibule of satisfaction.' . . . The organism is fit to live in a more complex and extended environment, in which the time-factor and the ability to wait are highly important factors in survival."⁷

The case worker can come to recognize the wide divergence between people in their capacity to sustain purposes over an extended period—to hold a practical end, an idea, a sentiment, in a state of tension while new experience has time to modify and enrich it. Such a readiness for growth implies an imaginative enlargement of scope in present values, and so adds to their meaning. Psychiatry confirms this when it suggests that "constitutional inability to tolerate disappointment and delay may be a factor predisposing to neurosis"⁸—i. e., a factor that makes against, where the "ability to wait" makes for, maturing.

The case worker can also appreciate, better than many others, the things in the psycho-social settings she meets that are *relevant* to growth and therefore form part of a given situation. She realizes that, as Dewey has said, "some things that are remote in space and time . . . may form [a person's] environment even more truly than some of the things close to him. *The things with which a man varies are his genuine environment.*"⁹ The factors in a man's environment with which he varies, moreover, may be brought within a degree of control. In need-situations the worker may help him toward recognizing bias, fixed

⁷ W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 179.

⁸ Dr. Karin Stephen, *Psychoanalysis and Medicine*, p. 39.

⁹ John Dewey, "Education as a Social Function" in *Democracy and Education*, p. 13.

attitudes that are limiting his perception, and therefore his control, of the things that will further mature living. Here insights from psychiatry assist understanding. She may also note and make the client aware of possible effects of fatigue in de-sensitizing him to value-aspects in a situation that would otherwise modify some over-strong bent. When "fatigue has lessened the integrative capacities of our mind, conflicting ideas are not brought into contact with the proposition which they would otherwise destroy."¹⁰

In earlier days of social work the help most likely to be stressed was personal counsel. Today the practice of social work is suffused by a spirit of respect for the underprivileged person as a free personality, and few case workers would describe their talk with an adult client as consisting of advice. The worker expects to say things that supplement what he can see unaided—that bring to attention special aspects of his situation, possible resources for bettering it, likely consequences of this or that course of action—leaving him free in the end to make up his own mind. Of course such talk adds *content* to his thinking and carries considerations which, in varying degrees, may *weight* his decision toward one course rather than another; but the worker's aim is to foster his sense of self-direction and to end with a client in a state of self-respecting independence.

Of late there has come to the fore in social work another form of this personal help to a client. Advances in the field of psychotherapy have made case workers increasingly realize that the client may be emotionally so entrained with inner conflicts, defense attitudes, and unadjusted drives that he really is not free to respond appropriately to

¹⁰ Bernard Hart, *Psychopathology*, p. 129.

his own situation or to do objective thinking about it. Where this occurs the worker may accept a relationship with the client that is dictated by the latter's need to gain an emotionally more healthy outlook. The part of the worker, as thus conceived, has been recently summarized as follows :

"(1) The most vital element in case work treatment lies in the understanding and utilization of the interchange of feelings within the immediate situation with the worker. Background material and pressure for activity gather their forces from this same impulsive center. This is the core of the situation with which we are faced. (2) There is a growing conviction that within each individual lies the ability, the impulse, to manage his own life. When a difficulty arises and he recognizes some need of help, he is able to use a neutral and understanding person at that time and on the point which troubles him. A case worker who recognizes this reality takes the individual no further than he wishes to go. (3) Treatment offers an opportunity for growth in emotional experience, to the end that the individual needs the worker less, and fully assumes the responsibility for his own life. (4) From a theoretical viewpoint, it is assumed that the individual will make use of this relationship to another person as he utilizes every experience in his life for growth."¹¹

It has already been noted (p. 77) that the Milford Conference (of leading social workers) expressed itself somewhat cautiously as to the degree of emphasis which case work will place on this semiclinical sort of help. In the measure that a worker commands a "situation view" of her clients' problems she will become less "client-centered," in the sense of being preoccupied with the private life of

¹¹ From a paper on "Directions in Treatment" presented by Miss Rose Green of the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic at the National Conference of Social Work; June, 1933. (Quoted with the author's permission.)

persons taken one by one. The situation in each case involves something like a "client group," between the members of which the individual states of mind are interdependent. Very often the immediate need is for help with certain "environmental" factors of an objective sort. This does not mean, however, that the worker is any the less concerned with the attitudes of individuals. In a "situation view" any favorable changes in objective circumstances such, for example, as an increase in the pension of an anemic widowed mother, appropriate employment for a handicapped man, better housing or country life for pre-tubercular children, special training for a gifted boy, play opportunities for mischievous youngsters, and so on, appear as forms of help which add to what is assimilable in experience for the maturing of the persons concerned. The meeting of these needs, which otherwise cramp and even distort the relations between any one individual and those about him, makes for fuller living. It thus tends to modify attitudes, to further a balance of personality, whether or not the clients involved have shown any pronounced attitude disturbance. By giving this person a sense of security, that one a lift from health worries and discouragements, still another an increase in status-satisfaction, a hope for some realizable achievement, an interest to enrich leisure time, a whole stalled situation may be released from its inhibitions, so to speak, and set moving ahead.

Many tasks of the experienced worker may indeed seem too objective and routinized to admit of this concern with personal growth. The tasks of "organizing" a pension (See p. 11), of getting a mother and children to a clinic regularly, of helping a wife prosecute a non-supporting husband, of guiding a socially isolated family toward con-

genial and accessible forms of group experience, may in themselves demand no finesse of insight. These steps, however, when considered not merely one by one, piecemeal, become thought of as sub-situations in the reshaping of a whole in which each is a significant phase. Moreover, although certain recurring needs are such that the appropriate resources go almost without saying—e. g., hospitals and clinics, relief and child-placing agencies—yet the worker who is conceiving the whole need-situation as a field of growth potentialities will look more discerningly among them as environmental factors that may favorably affect attitudes.

To illustrate, such a wider outlook seems clearly called for in case work with delinquents. Otherwise, misdemeanor boys and girls are placed in foster homes or sent to institutions for a training period and then returned to the homes, the neighborhoods—to the same sort of situation, in short—in which they have been social misfits before. The treatment is mistakenly confined to the unadjusted *individual*—following the self-limited method suitable for a broken leg—instead of including those aspects of his home, neighborhood, and school life which equally played a part in what was an unadjusted *situation*. To the “situation-minded” worker a real diagnosis here may focus upon parents with no active church connection, no relatives at hand with whom they are in close touch, no social ties that give a sense of identity with, of responsibility toward, any group: parents whose lives are impoverished in the materials they afford for growth of “personality”—and this, perhaps, in the midst of a crowd. Their children, therefore, have been accumulating forms of experience that omit the

very attitudes that would do most toward helping them assimilate value-aspects from a wider relatedness in *present* situations. The delinquents are simply young people who have suffered a blight in their capacity to mature.

When needs of a subjective sort are urgent, the worker with a "situation view" thinks of changes in the unadjusted attitudes of individuals, whether toward factors in the environment—e. g., fears because of employment insecurity—between persons—e. g., a mother and a rebellious child—toward group-sanctioned standards—e. g., overhumiliation at some loss in status—or toward a complex of circumstantial, personal and social aspects, as being forms of help which make for mutual growth among all the persons involved. In any given case the psychological needs of some one individual, the center of an unadjusted situation, may for the time being become the focus of attention. He and his personal urges or discomforts stand out in relief, as it were, against the situational background. His attitudes may have reached an unadjustment so extreme or so intricate as to call for the skill of a psychiatrist, they may respond to the therapeutic guidance of a social worker with special psychiatric training, or they may come within the understanding help of a worker whose training is less specialized. It may even appear desirable for the individual—as well as for those about him—that he be transferred from an embroiled situation for a time, for treatment in a foster home or in an institution. But whatever method is deemed most promising, the worker's broad objective, as *social* worker, will be to stimulate his value-attitudes toward a socializing enlargement; her concern with "his" personality will be with factors that im-

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pede or forward his growth among inter-relating persons and circumstances. She is interested in personality as something integral with social process.

THE CASE WORKER'S IDEAL OF "INDIVIDUALIZING"

The student of social work will meet this concern with the client as an individual in the professions of social agencies to "individualize" their service. "Individualizing," however, is an expression very loosely used, and the practices that it refers to will be found answering to widely differing levels of social purpose. The purposes of a public welfare department which is heavily pressed with numbers of applicants may reach hardly farther than the establishing and relieving of physical need. This one element in need-situations is all that time permits their taking into account. "Individualizing" at so modest a level may lie simply in adapting the form of assistance—cash, groceries, medical aid—and its amount to the particular case in hand. If, however, public officials are trained to social perceptiveness, they may, even in passing, catch more of the individual's needs, more of the *content* of the need-situation, and may be able to somewhat enlarge their purposes.

A higher level of "individualizing" will appear in agencies, usually privately financed, that are less pressed with applicants for help. With a lighter case load such agencies can expand their purposes to include detailed health care, vocational training, recreational opportunities, and so on, relief-giving being but one tool among many, to meet but one need among many. Such case work takes cognizance of a fairly inclusive range of factors in any need-situation, and results in competent, even "intensive" care for persons

in distress. Until recently it has understressed the imponderables—the resentments, discouragements, jealousies that are interwoven with health, employment, educational needs—dealing with them, when recognized, by mere mother-wit. Even now, it can easily remain piecemeal in the attention it gives to needs, concentrating first on one and then on another sub-situation of health, or schooling, or home-making, while missing all the inter-relatedness among such needs and between them and the attitudes of the persons involved.

A still further step in “individualizing” has come with the application to social case work of concepts from psychiatric theory. This has again expanded the purposes of the case-work agency to include a conscious, precise, and informed concern with attitudes. At this level the aim of case work is to help the client toward an understanding of his own urges and thwarts and toward coping with his own inner and outer problems. His more objective needs are met but are dealt with as subsidiary to his growing self-knowledge and self-direction. While this stage marks an advance in that it stresses highly important need-aspects, hitherto left to chance insight in case workers, it can lead to a contracting client-centeredness. Indeed, in its absorption with the inner life of the individual, it can make the unadjusted client so much the center of thought as to fail, like case work at the preceding level, to cognize the case as a multiple-factored whole.

It is in just this last respect that the “situation” philosophy differs from the previous conceptions of “individualizing.” Its purposes include all the relevant factors, both psychological and objective, but conceive them as a web, as a unit of relationships. Thinking situation-wise means

seeing multiple factors at *relatively* the same time; it does not mean that the worker will not, as occasion demands, dwell on one or another sub-situation for a period. She can focus on any one person as "client" for psychiatric or "personality" work, or on any objective aspect of need, such as convalescent care or vocational training, provided she ever and again harks back to the inclusive situation as her true "frame of reference."

In Chapter III we recognized the case "situation" as the distinctive unit of the case worker's concern. In the present chapter we have been seeing how this "situational" point of view affects the worker's view of individual persons. We have found that the idea of maturing relationships involves an interest in the "growth potentialities" of people, and an attention to the ways in which social groups condition personal attitudes. Most significantly we find that such are the complexities of psycho-social interstimulations and conditionings that successful growth does not readily come about without the conscious concern of some party to the process. This means that the case worker, as a party to the need situation and a sharer in its developments, is inevitably so placed as to see the field of growth and to touch the mechanisms of ameliorative change within and between persons. We may here end with another quotation from Arnold Gesell:

"Growth as such cannot be observed with immediacy. Its movement is too subtle to be caught on the wing. It is a process which must be interpolated between two stages. If the stages are too close, as in immediate perception, the process is not apparent; if they are too widely apart it also vanishes from view."¹²

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

This means, as he goes on to say, that we need a *method* of observing growth that will so mark off the interspaces between stages as to disclose the course of development. It is here suggested that in the "situation unit" the case worker has the pattern and the time-frame that make the course of maturing relationships discernible.

QUESTIONS

1. How do the following statements about the individual correspond with the view presented in this chapter?

a. "To know a personality is to possess specific information about the individual's habits of work, education, attitudes, achievements, dominant emotional trends, social adaptability, favorite recreations and sports, sex life, reactions to conventional standards, special peculiarities, and compensations for unsatisfactory adjustments. . . . The personality changes as old reactions are discarded and new ones are acquired. In the behaviorist's psychology, personality does not subsist and persist through the vicissitudes of life in the manner of the theological soul. But the dominant habit-systems at any given period constitute the personality at that time." Edna Heidebreder, *Seven Psychologies* (D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.), Chapter on Behaviorism, p. 253 ff. (Quoted with the author's permission.)

b. "The tasks of psychoanalysis, according to Freud, were those of discovering the basic urges or instincts, describing the ways in which these were expressed in the form of thoughts and acts, analyzing the structure of the personality as formed on this basis, explaining the mechanisms involved in normal and abnormal behavior, and determining adequate therapeutic techniques." Gardner Murphy and Friedrich Jensen, *Approaches to Personality* (Coward-McCann, Inc.), p. 141. (Quoted by permission.)

c. "The effect of repression [of any experience] on consciousness is to break contact with reality. It is the conscious

part of our whole mental make-up that seems to stand in closest touch with the outside world, and when any experience or instinct gets dissociated and so becomes unconscious, this means that it loses touch with real life. When this happens it stops developing, it can no longer continue to be modified by experience; and so, whatever has been dissociated does not grow up along with the rest of the personality which has maintained better contact with the outside world. It sets up what might be described as a delusional system inside the rest of the personality, cut off from the experiences which would normally modify it and dispel the delusion." Karin Stephen, M.D., *Psychoanalysis* (The Macmillan Company), p. 40. (Quoted by permission.)

d. "Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces . . . personal traits are functions of social situations. When we generalize this perception and act upon it intelligently we are committed by it to recognize that we change character from worse to better only by changing conditions—among which, once more, are our own ways of dealing with the one we judge. We cannot change habit directly: that notion is magic. But we can change it indirectly by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighting of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfilment of desires." John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Henry Holt and Company), pp. 16, 20. (Quoted by permission.)

e. "An individual cannot be defined adequately in terms of himself alone . . . The human being must first be thought of as a 'member-of-a-group,' and only later under narrowly restricted conditions can he be studied as an isolated biological individual. The group has been shown by anthropologists to be the true evolutionary unit, and no theory of personality or the self (or of any other mental feature) can be correct which disregards the formative influence of powerful social forces. 'A person could no more acquire a personality in the absence of the social group

than a man could become a soldier without being in an army.'” Raymond Wheeler, as summarized by George W. Hartmann, *Gestalt Psychology* (The Ronald Press Company), p. 76. (Quoted by permission.)

2. In what ways may the influence of the Freudian school of analysis tend to over-narrow the locus of a case-work problem?
3. In view of the monotonous character of much industrial work today, what does the following passage suggest as psychological reading that will help social workers in their approach to management officials? What bearing has the passage on the problem of understanding Snyder in Case C?

“Industrial is like clinical psychology in that it cannot be content merely with techniques that examine itemized functions of the individual: it requires to develop, in addition to these, a technique of examining what May Smith calls ‘the composite situation’ at any given moment. Pierre Janet excels as a psychopathologist in his capacity for accurate description of the present situation (at a given moment) of a psycho-neurotic under examination. His principle, as applied to industry, is that at any time—for example, experience of fatigue or monotony or both at once—in proportion as the individual’s hold upon the immediate reality about him (his task) diminishes, his imagination (revery or reflection) will light up and become his dominant mental mood . . . The preoccupation shows as morbid uncontrol or pessimism or as personal resentment of immediate superiors and fellow-workers. This suggests an important question, as yet not investigated, on the part played by imagination or reflection as a running comment on work and situation. At one extreme is the obsessive neurotic, his imagination irrelevant to his surrounding and inadequate to his situation: at the other is the artist or scientist whose reflections are relevant and adequate to the task that occupies him. Janet has tentatively formulated the conception of a quantum of energy used by the individual in maintaining equilibrium between himself and his sur-

rounding (his work and situation). When all of this energy is used (inadequacy) or none used (monotony), one observes 'fatigue'—i. e., morbid preoccupation. In more fortunate work situations there is that more proportionate relation between concentration and reflection which is characteristic of capacity for sustained work. This perhaps goes far to explain why it is in fact necessary to be much more actively alert to symptoms of 'fatigue' (i. e., monotony) in unskilled workers than in skilled. The skilled worker, his reflections relevant to what he is doing, is relatively less fatigable in this special sense of the term. By education in a modern society we develop the individual's capacity for skilled work; in school he is 'moved up,' class by class, between the ages of six and sixteen in such a fashion that his mental powers are kept always at slight tension, and his capacity for concentration is developed. Then in a factory we place him at a bench where, after the first few weeks, the demand of concentration made upon him is at a minimum. And so begins that irrelevant running comment on his work and situation which is of the essence of morbid preoccupation. It is this irrelevant comment which is discovered to be the basis of high labour turnover, discontent and inefficient production.

"The content of such reflection is always egocentric and personal; it tends, upon the whole, to take three forms. The individual is either apprehensive, troubled by unjustifiable alarms for himself and his family, or pessimistic, or suffers a form of personal resentment which makes him personally difficult to 'handle.'" Elton Mayo, "What Is Monotony?" *The Human Factor*, January, 1929. (Quoted by permission.)

CHAPTER V

WHAT "INTERVIEWING" DOES FOR THE NEED-SITUATION

The chapters thus far should have made it emphatically evident that social work means a great deal more than organized effort to help people out of trouble. It means the management of that effort in a spirit of cooperative self-education—often of self-reeducation—and since the social education of people takes place not just within but *between* persons, the worker develops a special kind of educational imagination in her view of personal and social relationships. In this view the immediate need-situation becomes a starting-point for cooperative activities that will express progressively maturer attitudes and confirm the stabler relationships that foster self-direction and growth. The worker's special part in this process must now be observed. She makes, generally speaking, a two-fold contribution to it: (1) she engages in purposeful talk with one and another of the persons involved in the given need-problem; and (2) she supplies contacts between these persons and the available community resources for their help in solving it. The first of these contributions is commonly spoken of as "interviewing."

In early case work "interviewing" was thought of primarily as a step in "investigation"; that is, in getting at the information on which a "diagnosis" of the client's needs should be made, and a plan of "treatment" framed. Much

was made of the "first interview" as presenting the opportunity for a start toward sympathetic understanding between worker and client, for learning how the situation appeared from the latter's viewpoint, and for getting at sources of added knowledge, such as employers, teachers, doctors and so on. The subsequent gathering of these added facts completed what was thought of as the initial case-work process. The worker's part in conducting such purposive inquiries with success was rightly regarded as giving play to skill. Indeed the time was when her ability to do good "investigating" was regarded as the prime test of her skill, the course of "treatment" being thought of as virtually dictated by the "facts" thus initially assembled.

This idea of the course of a social "case" as dividing between a phase of "fact-finding" and diagnosis and a phase of taking action for treatment had perhaps two reasons for its vogue. The first was that in early social work the organized and specialized resources of the community were few. Where the worker had but a meagre range of institutional services to draw upon, her initial interviewing would disclose about all the needs and circumstances that there was much prospect of dealing with. Today, with the advances in medical, psychiatric, and educational science and the many agencies for spreading their benefits, the worker finds her case possibilities expanding as "treatment" proceeds, with new facts emerging as the complexities of each case unfold. The second reason was that in earlier social thinking the *attitudes* that develop as the whole case develops were not so clearly recognized as "facts" of the situation itself. Today, as the worker becomes critically alive to what is happening when she talks with clients and other persons connected with a maladjustment, she finds

the distinction between interviews for information—"investigating"—and those for treatment growing less clear-cut. She notes that the attitudes stirred in the various parties to a situation in the course of any objective "fact-finding" become themselves subjective "facts" that may prove to be the most important elements in any forward-looking process, while facts of background that come out in the course of so-called treatment interviews may right along be throwing new lights on the need-situation. She will discover that her own attitudes—themselves again "facts"—may help actually to create other "facts."¹ Starting, then, with their first contacts, the worker and the whole group within the field of unadjustment, must try continuously to better their insight into all that is involved in bringing the need, or needs, to solution.

Interviewing today is therefore conceived as directed between worker and clients toward cooperatively sought insights into their common problems. With the unit of treatment thought of as a field of maladjustment, and not merely a maladjusted person, it is evident that the points of view of others involved in these problems may be quite as important as that of the individual who figures as "client." The worker may do a canvassing of relatives, employers, teachers, and so on, no less careful (though less routine) than the old "thorough investigation" called for. Each in turn of the persons she interviews may be especially alive to some aspect counting toward a grasp by the group of the whole complex social stimulus to which the "client" must respond for favorable ongoing. For it is not only the

¹ For illustration, see p. 7 f. Was Miss Horan's change from an unwillingness to discuss leaving the hospital—an important "fact"—to an active cooperation in after-care plans—another "fact"—due to differences in the way two workers felt toward her and she toward them?

spread of present relationships that will appear in what they have to say. They will severally make evident the *span* of the affair as a process in time: its backward reach to events still active as influences—whether of circumstance (e. g., burdens of insurance premiums, mistakes in choice of jobs) or of disposition (e. g., dormant wishes, rankling wrongs), and its forward reach toward the realizing of purposes that are now in the shaping.

This emphasis upon cooperatively sought insights and a mutual maturing of persons in a "client-situation" would make each interview, so far as is practicable, simply an exchange of talk in which two or more persons are seeking to better their own and each other's view of the case picture. The part of the case worker would resemble that of a good discussion leader. The latter does not "lead" in the sense of suggesting what the others would do best to think; his job is to help others to think at their best. It is to assure that the conferring procedure is such that a decision can be *developed* out of the participation of all. In the same way the case worker aims to "lead" the interview mainly by questions and comments which help people to see how they are placed, what needs and claims of others touch their own, what factors they may (from partial information or from emotional impulses) be understressing and overstressing in their present responses, and what courses might thinkably reshape the whole situation more worthily for all concerned. This "discussion-leading" service which the worker does in her interviewing facilitates the interviewee's thinking in two important ways. First, it helps him to get the whole cluster of situation factors into a sort of balanced picture before his mind's eye. A family

problem, for example, will—under her stimulus really to *understand* it—display such factors as

- (1) a husband's negligence,
- (2) a wife's slack home-making,
- (3) poorly fed and impulsively disciplined children,
- (4) the wife's neurotic state of health,
- (5) affection between the pair despite frictions,
- (6) the wife's awareness of a social background superior to her husband's,
- (7) the intolerance of her kin toward her inefficiency and drop in home standards,
- (8) the possible consequences of boarding the children away from home for a time,
- (9) those of attempting to build up health, stimulate the home-making, reeducate attitudes while keeping the family intact.

The other help to the interviewee's thought-processes is an influence toward more objective attitudes. The worker's concern to "see the case from all sides," to help set things going in a direction more socially maturing seems not only to set up a balance in her own inner activity, but to induce the client or other person involved in the maladjustment to put the case objectively, each from his or her own point of view. For instance, when the husband just referred to finds himself explaining his experience to a listener who recognizes in it elements familiar in other situations she has met, and sympathetically tries to get at its implications for his wife, his children, his employer, the nearer relatives on both sides, he begins to look at the matter through the listener's eyes, as it were, and to sense how things appear from other points of view than his own. In short, her *problem* attitude

—shown by questions, comments, expression of face—tends to draw him away from an ineffective engrossment in his own resentments and worries. He would begin to sense more of what was involved in adjusting the needs in question and thereby to get more hope of a possible control over the trends of his living. This same process would go on in her talks with the wife, and with the relatives. It would be a process of enlisting all these diverse sensitivities in mentally reconstructing a joint experience, including that of the interviewer herself, which would, in effect, amount to a *thinking together* even though the persons interviewed were all seen separately.

Of course it should be frankly recognized that the interview-circumstances are often such that the worker must do her part at a level less favorable than this of willing mutual enlightenment. She must take her situation as it comes—often with people non-cooperative because suspicious, resentful, obsessed with one aspect of the matter, disqualified for any real thinking by prejudice and defense-reactions. Indeed, such attitudes, which represent impulses of withdrawal from the modifying impact of fresh experience, make a psychological environment unfavorable to emotional balance in companions. In other words, unbalance is socially inducible, lack of poise in one member of a family bringing a strain on balance in the others.² The

² Pierre Janet, *Principles of Psychotherapy*, p. 187. "Neuroses and psychoses are not of course properly speaking contagious like infectious diseases. . . . But we often meet a large number of neuropaths united in the same family or in the same environment. Whether or not we use the word 'contagion' for these cases, I wish to insist . . . that living with certain persons is a condition that frequently determines and encourages neuroses." Later Janet refers to such persons as constituting a tiring social environment.

worker, then, will recognize that in so far as any one of the persons concerned in a need-situation yields to besetting attitudes, that person tends to halt a joint social process. He constrains others, who do not succumb to his partial view, to keep pressing upon him counter value-aspects which he is shutting out. They must do double duty toward achieving the open-mindedness that makes for an adequate assimilating of all relevant aspects in a situation, and for a maturing of its inter-relationships. This can become tiring—so much so that others react by over-acquiescence, or by irritability, or by keeping out of the way.

When situations present this sort of bafflement, the worker's first step may be to devise the best way to modify the interfering attitude. This may be by means of some environmental change, by help toward self-knowledge, by persuasion or even by pressure. She, however, does not allow these measures to divert her from an unremitting advance toward interview-relations in which her client-group are her free and open-eyed partners in a self-directing process.

In the pages that follow are presented a series of case interviews which are instructive as displaying (1) the different kinds of leadership required of the worker, and (2) differing kinds of advance in the case situation. In each instance the worker wrote out the account here offered not long after the actual talk. It will be noted that the cases show progressively less and less of the non-educative forms of suasion and pressure. Each case is followed by comments and questions by which the significance of the interview is developed in the light of ideas that have led up to it through the preceding chapters.

Case D. The Emergency Phase of a Pathological Situation

The Situation. Mrs. Martin had had a hard life with an inconsiderate husband who had finally deserted her and her three girls. After trying several times to get support from him through the court, she had placed the girls with a public Children's Department and had gone to work. Though her own married sister was interested in the children she distrusted her too much to consent to this sister's taking them into her own home. The trials of many years had worn her down. The court's woman probation officer, Miss Perkins, had stood by her and had her confidence.

The Interview. Mrs. Martin came up the office stairs as if climbing was difficult. To Miss Perkins' salutation she merely smiled sadly and with an air of mystery grasped the outstretched hand. Miss Perkins, equally silent, seated her caller near her desk and closed the door.

In an almost inaudible voice Mrs. Martin gasped out, "I'm depressed. I wanted to see you. I don't feel well."

"Oh, I'm sorry. How can I help?" (Quiet tone, not much louder than hers, but sympathetic.)

For some moments Mrs. Martin sat staring vacantly at the officer. She gave the impression of being under great emotional strain, unable to relieve herself by talk. Finally, pausing after each sentence, she exclaimed, "Vengeance is sweet. I have Indian in my blood, you know. They never forget." Her tone was hollow. She continued, murmuring, "More than mud goes over the dam. Do you know that? It's not all mud."

Miss Perkins scarcely moved, wishing not to distract the woman's attention before she confided her immediate difficulty, and aiming to express sympathy through an interested bearing.

"Oh, they have done terrible things. You do not know. Mr. Martin will find out. He has done it. So has Mary (her sister). To me! I could use a gun, I know I could. I did not know they cost so little—I'm tired."

The officer waited so as not to appear to be trying to divert her, and said quietly, "You are tired, aren't you?" Then, be-

lieving that a psychiatrist might be needed before the day was over and that emphasis on illness might get Mrs. Martin into a mood to consult him, she added, "You are ill."

"I'm worn out. I've been sick. I can't rest. I've got to work."
(Spoken slowly, dully.)

"Will your sister help you get a rest?"

"My sister?" with quiet scorn, "she would not help"
(pause).

There followed a repetition of "More than mud," and so on, after which she lapsed into taut silence.

Realizing that the woman was dangerously overwrought, Miss Perkins tried to help her break forth by referring to her husband. After expressions of resentment against him and of anxiety about her children, Mrs. Martin said, "I *want* to talk to you. I feel I must, but" (looking nervously toward the door past which people were walking) "somehow I can't today."

Then, with a quiver of lips and in the same dull voice, "Will you come to see me if I am in jail next week? I'll need you. Will you?"

Showing no surprise Miss Perkins assured her she would, but spoke of the disgrace the thing she was planning would bring upon her girls, and recalled the mother's justifiable pride in their fine qualities. As talk went on tears rolled down the caller's cheeks, and her tension gradually lessened. She partly yielded to Miss Perkins' quiet, steady pressure toward seeing Dr. Smith at the Psychopathic Clinic, yet looked harassed as she kept pacing up and down the room. An appointment was made with Dr. Smith.

"Maybe I could talk to him. I don't know. You're easier to talk to. But I must do it. I've Indian blood"—and so on.

Miss Perkins decided to take action. She put on her hat and told Mrs. Martin to "come along, we'll go see the doctor." With patient urging she got her down the stairs at a snail's pace, into a trolley, then again creeping along the street, to the clinic. From time to time all the way the patient muttered the same words, "revenge," "you won't stop me?" and so on. She enlarged on a current murder trial of a woman: "women get off easy in cases like that." People looked at her curiously.

Dr. Smith met the patient at the door, and after a few minutes' talk with her alone, reported that she was suffering from a definite psychosis with delusions of persecution and was in a dangerous state. Since she refused hospitalization he had called for plain clothes men.

When told that she was to go to a hospital Mrs. Martin grew furious. The plain clothes men took her quietly by the arm to lead her to the patrol wagon. The sight of this sent her into a panic. Dr. Smith patted her shoulder, telling her that the wagon was to take her to the hospital and that some day she would thank Miss Perkins and himself. Vindictively she answered that she would "get them both." Miss Perkins climbed into the patrol.

"You're not going in that?"

"Why of course. You did not suppose I'd leave you like this?"

Dr. Smith helped her in and again she said she'd "get" them both. Miss Perkins put her arm round her, when suddenly she laid her head on the officer's shoulder, clasped her convulsively, and sobbed out, "But I must do it." The men eyed her suspiciously. She bristled and assured them "Miss Perkins is the best friend I have. I insulted her but she has stood by me. And Dr. Smith is a gentleman."

Miss Perkins explained to her that they were going to the station to see another doctor. At the station house she showed fear, but calmed down when she saw that the Probation Officer was remaining with her. At Miss Perkins' request the two women were placed together in a cell to await the police doctor, thus securing quiet and giving the patient an idea of what prison might be.

"Isn't this a terrible place? But you're here with me. You'll stay?"

"Of course I'll stay. And after a while we'll ride together to the hospital and I'll help you get the rest you need."

"I am tired. I haven't told you yet."

"Must you tonight? You're so tired and I'll come to see you. Rest now and tell me what you want me to do."

Leaning wearily against Miss Perkins she talked about her

family, turned over her keys, letters, and money, and asked that her employer be notified that she was sick. She became so quiet, though incoherent, that the police doctor when he came was obviously puzzled, and seemed to suspect that the woman was being railroaded away. Miss Perkins therefore asked her questions regarding her sister's interest in her children. She at once became excited, talked of revenge and so on. The doctor signed the commitment slip. Though again excited by the patrol wagon, she calmed down on being assured that the Probation Officer would accompany her and see her put to bed, and ended by going along willingly. When they alighted at the hospital the police took her by both arms. Miss Perkins suggested that she herself escort her. Murmuring something about "danger," the men nevertheless acquiesced.

The Probation Officer went with her as far as the neuro-psychiatric ward, where the patient was put to bed. After Miss Perkins had outlined the woman's situation to the doctor on call, he took her into the ward, giving as a reason that she "seemed to be able to quiet the patient." Mrs. Martin's tremulous, worried face relaxed, and lighted up when she saw her friend.

"Oh, you're still here. You've been so good to me. Will you stay a few minutes?"

"Yes, but you're to try to sleep. We'll talk some other time."

She glanced apprehensively at other patients in the room, who were certainly distressing to hear. Miss Perkins sat by her bed, holding her hand. The doctor nodded approval and departed. After a time—"I begin to feel a little rested." She had been given a bromide. A long pause—"It's after 9:30. You've been with me since early afternoon. You've had no supper." Tears rolled down her cheeks. "I'm glad you came with me—Will you do something more?"

"Of course."

"Will you 'phone to Dr. Ridgely (her regular physician) that I am here and will you tell Mary?" (her sister).

"I'll communicate with them both tomorrow. Tonight, you know I am going to 'phone Mrs. Wing" (her employer) "and tomorrow I'll talk to the Children's Department."

With tears in her eyes she squeezed Miss Perkins' hand. In a few minutes more she became drowsy and the Probation Officer said good-night.

Instructive Points in Case D

1. **Definition of the Situation.** In the first paragraph above are summarized the background factors which make themselves felt in the client's present state of mind. In addition are the present circumstances attendant upon her coming to the probation officer, on their talk at the office, their actions in going to the clinic and (abetted by others) to the station and the hospital. Subjective factors appear in the revenge-impulses of the client, the old-time fear-and-force response which is apt to characterize police in the presence of mental disturbance, the unruffled poise of the probation officer, the expert interest of the physicians. The situation is defined by the need which started as an impulse in the patient to seek help, and developed in the probation officer's mind as a necessity for getting prompt expert care. The "circuit" making it a unit of thought and treatment is completed by the fulfilment of the immediate purpose in the admission into the hospital and the patient's acceptance of this outcome.

2. **The Client's Participation.** Throughout the interview, the client exercises no initiative. She makes no active or conscious contribution toward recognizing the various aspects in the situation to which appropriate response is desirable. It is the worker who calls up her love for and pride in her children and suggests consequences to them that would spoil the satisfaction of revenge. It is she who by having the client and herself put into a station cell helps her to anticipate punishment as a reality, instead of as a

vaguely felt price for uncontrol from the paying of which "women get off easy." Even these obvious and urgent aspects could arouse no adequate response while she was feeling what was, within bounds, a justified resentment over her wrongs. Left to herself this one urge, as the physicians decided, was likely to overwhelm her. The difficulty she seemed to encounter in talking out her troubles, despite her expressed desire for this relief, seems significant. It began to give way with the worker's reminders about her children; the excitement of a single drive grew less, deeper offsetting attitudes asserted themselves, and a step toward emotional balance became possible.

3. The Interviewer's Technique. This is an extreme case of a client too ill to exercise judgment and in danger of committing some impulsive act that could not be undone when she regained her emotional control. Temporarily, therefore, her relation to the worker was on the level of child to adult. The worker felt herself accordingly justified in using persuasion and even coercion while the emergency lasted. Her pressure, however—as when, taking her hat, she said, "Come along, we'll go see the doctor"—was a pressure less external than that of ordinary official coercion. The probation officer's relation with this client was built upon long acquaintance, many helpful acts, and mutual respect. The client, disturbed in mind though she was, was still enough herself to sense a need for guidance and to select the person who could give her support—a touching evidence of helplessness and trust. The worker's part could not proceed upon a maturing level where both adults make competent contributions. It called mainly for perceptive sympathy, an "atmosphere" of resourcefulness and poise, and a readiness to take responsibility for a decision where

the more mature procedures for decision-making were ruled out by the circumstances.

Case E. One Member Emotionally Resistant to the Group Purpose

The Situation. A doctor in a Psychopathic Hospital asked the help of the hospital's service department in getting a patient to enter a convalescent home. The patient, Mrs. Freeman, aged 35, was the mother of four children under 12. Her husband, of her own age, had been working steadily for four years as guard on the Elevated, and earning \$100 a month. Her mother, a widow, lived comfortably with an unmarried daughter and a son. The mother and sister had frequently taken care of the children when Mrs. Freeman was ill. The latter's marriage had been against the wishes of her family.

Mr. Freeman had been brought up by a widowed mother who supported herself by keeping lodgers. She spoke of herself as having been indulgent to him. He had not always worked steadily, or earned much, and had been somewhat given to drink. Attractive in appearance, he had at one time, years before, been unfaithful to his wife. Nevertheless, he was not now neglectful of his family. Mr. Freeman consulted a doctor at the hospital about his wife, because she would get angry with small cause and would then be destructive. She threw dishes about, gouged a door-jamb with a knife when she could not unlock the door readily, broke a stove-lid.

The doctor diagnosed her condition as paranoid, possibly dementia praecox. Since her paranoid ideas centered on her husband, she would probably not be violent away from him. She told the doctor, however, that she would not go to a Home for rest. Despite this, Mr. Freeman arranged to have relatives care for the older children, and Miss Bell, the case worker from the hospital, secured a foster home for the baby. The patient then promised her husband she would go to Valley House—a Convalescent Home to which Miss Bell had obtained admission—and this although at the moment she thought it a home for delinquent girls. The patient's own preference, however, was to

go to a married sister in Calgary, Canada. The distrust she felt toward her husband extended to the doctor, whom he had called in, and possibly somewhat to the psychiatric worker whom she had not seen before this call.

The plan between this visitor and the husband was that he and his wife should take the baby to the foster home one day, and that on the next he would take the patient to Valley House. The visitor would call that morning and, if the patient refused to go to the Home, would make use of the commitment papers which the husband had taken out, in order to get her to the Psychopathic Hospital.

The interview was held in the living-room of the patient's home, a small, dark apartment, poorly furnished and showing signs of her destructiveness, yet clean. It was Monday about 10 A. M. Mr. Freeman was present, and the children came in and out without entering into the conversation.

The Interview.

HUSBAND (*lets the visitor in*): Good morning, I would have telephoned you that my wife refuses to go to the Home, but I thought you would not be in the office. She wouldn't even go to see the home for the baby.

VISITOR: I went to the office first because I thought you might telephone in and I had mail to open anyway.

(*The husband leads the visitor into the living-room and introduces her to the patient.*)

VISITOR: You don't want to go to Valley House?

PATIENT (*with antagonistic glances toward husband*): No, I don't want to go anywhere. I wouldn't trust the baby with any stranger. Anyway, the time they should have sent me away was after my operation last winter, not wait until now. I'll be all right if I'm left alone at home in peace with only one of the children to take care of.

VISITOR (*to establish rapport*): Just what was your operation?

PATIENT: They removed a lump on the right side (*pointing to her abdomen*) which they called a tumor, I think, at the City Hospital. What kind of place is Valley House?

VISITOR: It is a very nice home for women who need to be built up physically as the doctor thinks you need to be. A doctor examines you when you get there, and he decides how long you should stay. Maybe your mother would keep the baby. Do you think she would?

PATIENT: I am sure she could not—anyway I'm not sure that I want her to. The trouble is all with him (*pointing to husband vindictively*); he goes with Emma who I used to think was a friend of mine.

HUSBAND (*nodding to visitor knowingly*): I called up Emma's house and found that she is out of town. She is an older married woman, an old family friend who has always been very good to us. Don't you remember, Mary (*his tone is kindly*), how she has kept the baby for you at times?

VISITOR: Where would you like to go?

PATIENT: To Calgary where my sister is.

VISITOR: Calgary is very far away. Valley House is much nearer. Would you consider going if your mother would take the baby?

PATIENT (*calming down*): I might.

VISITOR: Do you think she would mind my asking her? I can go right over there now if you want me to. Where does she live and how can I get there from here?

PATIENT (*brightening*): She won't mind. You take—(*gives directions to get there by trolley*). Let me see, I'll look up the exact number. I know she's home.

(*Visitor gets up to go after writing down the street address, which she already knew.*)

PATIENT: That's very nice of you to take the time. Goodbye.

VISITOR: I'll be back in an hour or so to let you know what she says.

(*The visitor interviews patient's mother and sister at their home, secures further information from them and discusses plans for caring for the children. They refuse to take any of the children but the mother finally agrees to go with the visitor to discuss matters with the patient. On the way to the patient's house the visitor places facts clearly before the mother regarding the doctor's advice for convalescent care or else observation*

at the Psychopathic Hospital. She appears upset by the idea but not surprised. When they enter the patient's rooms, the patient is preparing lunch for the family. The husband takes over the cooking and the patient talks with her mother and the visitor in living-room.)

MOTHER (*in a mild and patient tone*): Mary, you know I can't take the baby. What would you do if I were not alive?

PATIENT (*with childlike trust and dependence*): Oh, I know you can't. I didn't expect you to. Do you think I ought to go to the Valley House?

MOTHER: Yes, I do. (*looking at visitor*) I think you should do just what she says, place the baby out and go to Valley House for as long a time as necessary.

PATIENT: Well, all right, but I can't go today. I have all the ironing to do and the children aren't ready. I couldn't go until day after tomorrow.

MOTHER: I can help you iron.

PATIENT (*seemingly doubtful and worried*): Maybe I could.

VISITOR: I can telephone Valley House now and see whether they can take you Wednesday instead.

HUSBAND (*from the kitchen*): I think if she is going, she ought to go right away—(*catching sight of mother-in-law's face, he adds*) Oh well, I don't care, I just want her to do what is best. (*Sees the visitor out, saying*) Those papers (*commitment papers*) are over at my mother's if you want them.

VISITOR: Oh no, if she'll go to Valley House, we had better try there first.

(*At a drug store the visitor telephones Valley House and finds that the patient may go on Wednesday.*)

VISITOR (*returning*): They will take you on Wednesday, and I know that the foster home will take the baby this afternoon.

PATIENT: Oh, all right, that gives me plenty of time. I am sorry you had to take so much trouble. Won't you have a cup of coffee or something?

VISITOR: Oh no, thank you, I am going right down town and I'm not used to my lunch before one o'clock. You won't change your mind about going on Wednesday, will you? Be-

cause, you see I am responsible to Valley House and I don't want to disappoint them a second time.

PATIENT: I know. I am sorry to have caused you so much trouble, but I'll go this time. When I say that I'll do a thing, I do it.

HUSBAND: I'll go with her. This has taken a lot of your time and we are surely grateful to you.

Instructive Points in Case E

1. The "Need Situation" as Here Defined. The specific field of attention in this interview is a "sub-situation" centering around the need of getting expert help for a mental disability that was demoralizing the home life. Involved in the problem were the husband and wife, the latter's mother, other immediate relatives of both, the children, the social worker and the physician; also the local resources for care of the mentally ill. The solution that is implicitly sought by this group is one that will at the same time avert the alienating of the husband by further embroilments, secure treatment for the wife, and do this without recourse to a coercion that by humiliating the latter would leave traces of bitterness in their continuing relations. The "circuit" of process which makes this a case-unit is completed by the wife's final entrance into the Convalescent Home.

2. The Significance of the Client's Self-Centeredness. As one of this group Mrs. Freeman was taking part in a joint effort of problem-solving. Could she have looked objectively at her situation, she would have seen her husband as a man whose temporary unfaithfulness was in the past and who was now supporting his family; she would have seen herself as a wife in poor physical condition, the mother of four young children for whose well-being her health was essential; she would have recognized her situa-

tion as one made up of physical factors—her health, her limited comforts—and of social ties and interdependencies—her family relationships—which required some cooperative, outgoing activity that would ultimately have augmented her influence over her husband and children and would have given her a sense of achievement. She would have “realized her self” by making real the happily functioning family life which she and her social group hold in respect.

Such effort, however, was not possible to poor Mrs. Freeman. Her mental activities were so enchanneled in suspicious resentment that she did not heed her husband’s patience, his concern for her, or the evidence that his advice was sensible and disinterested. She took cognizance only of such of his words or actions as fed her resentment, and indeed one would say was hunting for anything in her situation which could be distorted to justify this attitude. For instance, her husband’s telephoning to an old and kind family friend she took as evidence that he was “going with” this woman. In other words she could not see and respond to her situation as a whole because she was not acting as a whole “self” or “personality.” She was acting, one might say, as a dissociated attitude, that of suspicious resentment. And her behavior appears to have been not so much a response to her situation as a whole but to detached bits of it. For example, she responded to the detached fact of her husband’s telephoning to Emma, ignoring the related facts of old friendship, kindness, Emma’s maturity and married state. Her experience therefore did not grow but tended to go on repeating itself, and to become a mere emotional relief, a rolling up of evidence that the behavior of other people was not to be trusted.

3. **Pressure Held in Reserve.** The interview problem differs from that in Case D in that here the need of action is less peremptory. Mrs. Freeman could be allowed two days to prepare for leaving her family, and therefore coercion, although a latent factor in the shape of commitment papers, could be kept in abeyance. The commitment papers, although the patient was unaware of them, may have given the visitor and the husband a sense of control over the situation—making for attitudes of poise—and probably made the mother more anxious that the patient should agree to convalescent care. Affecting the attitudes of these three persons, the presence of the papers as a last resort would but indirectly affect the patient. The frank and direct suasion exerted on Mrs. Freeman throughout was based mainly on established confidence in her mother, and doubtless somewhat on her growing trust in the visitor.

4. **Acts That Support the Dialogue.** Note that the visitor took the trouble (which must have impressed Mrs. Freeman) of calling upon her mother—an act which incidentally gave her the chance to tell the latter privately that a Hospital commitment might be necessary. Note also that the husband, by taking over the cooking in the kitchen, became a less immediate irritant during the talk in the living-room.

Case F. The Fatigue Factor as Thwart to Appropriate Response

The Situation. Mrs. Thorne was the deserted wife of a man who had been arrested for various offenses, including larceny. She had taught school before marriage, and in spite of adversity had given her children good physical care. Her unhappy marriage, however, had probably aggravated what appeared

to be a "high-strung" temperament. Although her affection for her husband had apparently died, she seemed to derive pleasure from spying on him, and had allowed schemes of this sort to occupy her mind to the children's detriment. After a brief period of help from a brother and then from the public treasury, her pride led her to take a position that overtaxed her strength. During her daily absence from home fourteen-year-old Janice cared for the house and younger children, a boy of twelve and a girl of four. The boy was already giving trouble in school and was beyond his mother's control.

Janice was a strikingly pretty girl of mature figure. Having been a docile child, doing well in school, playing with girls her own age and absorbed in the young people's activities at the church, she had of late become friendly with several young married couples of rather poor standards. A crisis came when one of the neighbors, angered apparently by her husband's attentions to Janice, brought the girl into court on a charge of assault. The case was dismissed as a petty fracas, but the policeman who made the investigation was troubled by Janice's sophisticated remarks and by the neighborhood gossip in part confirmed by her own admissions. He brought the matter to the notice of Mrs. Ford, visitor for the family agency that had already been in consultation on Mrs. Thorne's difficulties. Mrs. Ford arranged to see Mrs. Thorne at the parsonage, where they would be free from interruption by the younger children, and where the clergyman's wife, Mrs. Wilbur, of whom both the mother and Janice were fond, could take a helpful part.

The Interview. The three women greeted each other in the cosy parsonage sitting-room. Mrs. Thorne assumed a defensive attitude. To inquiries as to her work and whether or not her physical strength was overtaxed, she tartly replied that she loathed the job but that the \$15 she earned kept her from being a pauper. At this point the minister dropped in—thawing the atmosphere a bit, but sensing from his wife's face that he was not needed, he withdrew.

VISITOR: I know you are in a hurry to get back home, Mrs. Thorne, so perhaps we had better say at once that Mrs. Wilbur

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and I are worried about Janice and we know that you must be too.

CLIENT: It is a lot of fuss about nothing. Janice would be all right if the neighbors could find someone else to talk about.

VISITOR: But is it just talk, Mrs. Thorne?

CLIENT: Of course it is. I asked Janice and she told me herself it wasn't true; so you see it is all a pack of lies.

VISITOR: You feel that you have Janice's confidence and that she always tells you the truth?

CLIENT: Indeed she does not. That girl drives me crazy. Seems as if the truth isn't in her. Even Mrs. Wilbur could not make her tell the truth about the money she stole from Mrs. Drake.

MRS. WILBUR: Shouldn't we be very careful how we accuse Janice of wrong-doing? You know that Mrs. Drake had employed other nurse girls besides Janice, and that they might have taken the money.

CLIENT: That is what Janice said too. She says she did take a dollar once and would have been willing to return it if Mrs. Drake had not accused her wrongly at other times.

VISITOR: Did you make her give the money back?

CLIENT: Well, I tried to but she wouldn't; so I thought that it was up to Mrs. Drake to make her. Janice has a streak of her father in her and there is no helping it.

VISITOR: Mrs. Wilbur and I think there is a way of helping it if you put the time and effort into it.

CLIENT (*sharply*): What do you mean?

VISITOR: Well, let's face all the problems at once. Do you approve of Janice's friendship with Mr. Nelson?

CLIENT (*defiantly*): Eddie Nelson has always been a gentleman. Janice says so.

VISITOR: Don't you know what all the rest of the neighborhood seems to know, that Mr. Nelson has been drinking every night for the last two weeks and that he was sent to jail this morning? You know Janice admits that Mr. Nelson has frequently sent for her when his wife was out and that they danced together.

CLIENT: Well, Janice doesn't go there any more. I have forbidden it.

MRS. WILBUR: Do you always know where Janice is? She says she deceived you about the night you thought she was at the church supper.

CLIENT (*with rising anger*): I know where she was that night. She was at the Driscolls' at one of their rowdy parties, and mind you she had the nerve to come home at midnight, smelling of liquor. If I had not been too tired, I'd have taken the strap to her. It's all Mrs. Driscoll's fault. She is no good. Why her own mother told me she had to put her away when she was fourteen.

VISITOR: Mrs. Driscoll's mother had to go out to work every day and leave her daughter alone.

CLIENT: I know what you mean, but aren't there plenty of other girls besides Janice keeping house while their mother goes out to work?

VISITOR: Let's talk a little bit longer about Mrs. Driscoll, even if you do not like her. Don't you think she is extremely pretty?

CLIENT (*grudgingly*): Well, some say she is. The men seem to think so.

VISITOR: Do you realize that for all her three babies, she is only twenty? She was married when she was sixteen.

CLIENT: Well, I guess she had to get married.

MRS. WILBUR: You do not want such a thing to happen to Janice.

VISITOR (*sympathetically*): Haven't you just about all the trouble you can stand up under now, Mrs. Thorne?

CLIENT (*wearily*): If Janice does not know any better than to get into a mess like that, how can I help it?

VISITOR: Aren't you expecting a great deal of Janice? She is only fourteen, and you are asking her to have all the judgment of a grown up woman.

CLIENT (*on the verge of tears*): I could not bear to put her in a reform school.

VISITOR: Neither could we. Janice is too fine a girl. Did you

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ever stop to think what a lot of good points she has? In the first place she has brains. You cannot think how many fine things the principal said about her. He felt very badly that she had to leave school.

MRS. WILBUR: She is a generous girl and has a sweet, sunny disposition.

CLIENT (*brightening*): She is a good worker, Janice is. There is not a lazy bone in her body. You never have to drive her to do housework. And she is always good to the baby. Lots of girls would think she was a bother.

MRS. WILBUR: Doesn't all this prove that Janice is too worth while to let slide?

VISITOR: Janice is not to blame for all that has happened. Don't think that we feel that she is. She is so very pretty that all sorts of temptations are bound to come her way.

CLIENT: I know. That Smith man is always pestering her. Every time she goes downstairs seems as if he were in the hall waiting for her.

VISITOR: Mrs. Thorne, in what sort of a place did you spend your girlhood?

CLIENT (*bitterly*): It wasn't like this place. We weren't rich but we lived in a decent place where you got somewhere outdoors that wasn't on the street. My kids know more about the wickedness of the world than I ever did at their age.

VISITOR: Isn't there a place for you and the children back in your old home?

CLIENT: No. My brother won't do anything for me.

VISITOR: Perhaps you could do something for him?

CLIENT: How? I'd only be a burden.

VISITOR: You said once that your sister did not like the farm. Perhaps she could go back to her school teaching and you could keep house for your brother?

CLIENT (*stubbornly*): My brother has always said that he would not support Bill Thorne's children. He has said it lots of times.

VISITOR: I don't blame him, but Mr. Thorne is not supporting the children and with the warrants out for him, he is not apt to come back.

CLIENT (*angrily starting off on her old hobby*): If I could just get hold of him, I'd make him give me some money. He couldn't sneak off from his family again.

VISITOR: You know if he comes back, he will be sent to jail for a long time, and where will the money come from then? You aren't strong enough to keep on at your work indefinitely. You're just as tired as you can be right now. Oughtn't we to count Mr. Thorne out entirely, and make some plan together for the children's future? How would it be if you and I both write to your sister and ask her advice?

CLIENT: No I think you'd better write to my brother. He is the one to do the deciding. R. F. D. #2 will reach him. I will write him tonight myself.

VISITOR: There is another person's advice we need: somebody who probably understands more about girls like Janice than anybody else in the city. Would you be willing for Janice to be examined by this Dr. X?

CLIENT: Yes, if they would not put her away.

VISITOR: That is fine. Now if this doctor wanted her to have a vaginal examination, would you consent?

CLIENT (*after a little thought*): You know, I think that is a good idea. After all, if Janice has been misbehaving, the sooner I know it, the better.

VISITOR: I was sure you would see it that way. I will find out when Dr. X can see her and let you know.

CLIENT: And just as soon as my brother writes you, will you come and see me?

VISITOR: I surely will.

MRS. WILBUR: I will explain to Janice why we want her to see Dr. X.

CLIENT: Thanks, Mrs. Wilbur. You can do it better than I can. Janice likes you and she will do anything to please you. I had better get home now. Goodbye. I am sorry I have made you so late for your supper.

VISITOR: Goodbye, Mrs. Thorne. We will all think things over, and perhaps we will have some still better ideas.

Instructive Points in Case F

1. **Definition of the Situation.** The persons taking part in this interview represent an "operative situation" which must be thought of as including Janice and the two children, those near neighbors who were introducing a very young girl to demoralizing excitement, and also—as background figures—the husband, and Mrs. Thorne's brother and sister. Its content therefore displays (a) the relationships between these persons, and (b) various conditions of attitude and circumstance that have developed; for example, the client's desire to force support from her husband, her distorted pride in not being a "pauper," her over-fatigue, which probably accentuated both these feelings and made her less stable in her influence on her children, the children's rebellious turning to ready excitements, the effect of a poor neighborhood on the standards of an unsupervised attractive girl, the police-court episode, which justified the mother's advisers in initiating the interview as a step toward action. The whole circuit of developments (actual and potential) which constitute this "situation-unit" as the case worker's object of attention would be completed by some such readjustment as the family's removal to more favorable surroundings—or, of course, by some definite failure of readjustment.

In the immediate meeting there are at work such influences as the client's established good will toward her well-wishers—the visitor and Mrs. Wilbur, their emotional stability as contrasted with her "high-strungness," the parsonage setting removed from associations of the client's home worries. As immediate aims for their talk there were two which the visitor put forward on the basis of her own

personal judgment: the aim of agreement to communicate with the client's brother and sister, and the aim to secure a medical examination for Janice. These were decisions of a merely instrumental sort: the one renewing the family contacts, the other enlisting advice from a specialist. They could be sought by persuasion without any want of respect for the client's responsibility for determining final action. The more ultimate aim of this interview, however, was to get measures started that would end by really solving Mrs. Thorne's present problem. Here the decisions would be of a major sort, involving the client's self-respect, and growth in control of her own affairs. The visitor allowed this aim to *develop*, without trying to persuade Mrs. Thorne to any specific course. Both she and Mrs. Wilbur were here concerned simply to get their friend to rally her powers (depressed by fatigue) and start effective thinking about her children's future.

As background to the "operative situation" one can note in this case the general cultural setting of the community life. The standards of the immediate neighbors—their conceptions of married life, the tastes in pleasure that they were displaying before Janice, the effect of a girl's regard or disregard for conventions on the sort of social experiences that come her way—e. g., its effect on the attitudes of men and boys toward her—all represent social conditionings in the persons involved. The same is true of Mrs. Thorne's pride in self-support, her dread of being a pauper. This is a feeling likely to be strong according as it meets traditionary approvals or disapprovals as voiced by relatives and friends. The influence, then, of more or less conflicting "cultural" values constitutes an important aspect of this case.

2. The Interview Relationships and the Client's

State of Mind. Owing in part to her pride, wounded by her good-for-nothing husband and difficulties of family support, and in part to her fatigue from over-work, Mrs. Thorne, although a woman quite equal to open-minded thinking, was at the present juncture unfitted emotionally to "face facts." From certain aspects of her problem her mind simply shied away, as if unequal to the tension of a problem-attitude and a sustained total view. Janice's cheap friendships, her own absence from home, her over-fatigue, the unruliness of the children, the poor neighborhood—all these factors of whose existence she is aware she yet fails to take in *in their relational aspects*. She expresses indignation at Janice's misdoings, yet without looking squarely at the relation between the growing unruliness of her children and her own absence from home; she condemns the behavior of her neighbors, yet does not keep her attention to the possible consequences of such influence on a young unformed character. The rôle of her friends, therefore, was not to supply new information, nor to exercise persuasion, but to emphasize aspects of which though cognizant she was making little, because she was reacting to them in a merely piecemeal fashion. Of course, although neither the visitor nor Mrs. Wilbur used pressure, their views were inevitably *weighted* by prestige-elements derived from the institutions they represented—the welfare agency and the church.

3. Points of Technique in the Interview-Leading.

At certain points in the discussion the visitor exercises skill in leadership which deserves notice. (a) When Mrs. Thorne declares that "Eddie Nelson has always been a gentleman," quoting Janice, the visitor (followed by Mrs. Wilbur) also quotes Janice, instead of merely bludgeoning the defense-reaction with the facts. They in this way show themselves

to be sharers of Janice's confidences. (b) The mother's harsh words about the young and pretty Mrs. Driscoll are treated as introducing a parallel to Janice's case—a parallel showing the later unhappy consequences of similar factors: a young and attractive girl exposed to low-grade social companionships while her mother is daily absent at work. In effect Mrs. Thorne has *initiated* an argument against her own present course of action. (c) The delicate question of a possible return to the wholesome setting of Mrs. Thorne's old home is raised only *after* Mrs. Thorne has herself enlarged on its advantages. Note that the client's pride-ridden view of her relation to the brother gets a shift when the visitor queries: "Perhaps you could do something for him." This changes the area of attention from things done *for* her (a burden) to things done *by* her (an asset). As a help to her thinking it represents what in psychological parlance is called the principle of "direction"—the giving of a suggestion that alters the *approach* to the problem, and thereby sets all its factors in a new light and perspective.³

For Questions and Exercises this chapter and Chapter VI should be taken together. See p. 189.

³ See Norman R. Maier, "Reasoning in Humans: I. On Direction," *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, Vol. X, No. 2 (1930), pp. 115-143.

CHAPTER VI

SEEING AND RESPONDING IN THE INTERVIEW RELATION

In the three interviews that we have been discussing the case worker has had to exercise a leadership involving elements of persuading and even of pressure. This was because in each case the key person was emotionally overwrought, and the emergency did not admit of time to establish the more mature sort of interview relation in which the worker's leadership could preserve her client group in a free and open-eyed partnership of effort to better their common view of the whole case-picture. We should now observe the worker's part in interviews with people more capable of reacting "normally" to their problems, so that decisions can be "developed" out of a true conferring procedure. Of course we are not expecting people who are having troubles to "react normally" in the sense of "seeing things straight" and "responding sensibly." We recognize the tensions of attitude in any problem-situation as having disturbing effects upon vision and behavior. By "reacting normally" we mean simply that people are displaying no more than the usual difficulties of getting adjustments of mind to the matters before them, so that the interview relationship can be managed in ways that conduce to mutual enlightenment and growth.

What is sought in the interview is an advance in that "maturing" which we have described (p. 97) as taking

place "when each party contributes his special sensitivity and point of view to the adequate envisaging and handling of a shared situation in such wise that all parties to it achieve responses that are more sensitively appropriate, integrated, and outreaching toward emergent values." Just what, now, is the psychological problem of achieving, in the interview relation, the kind of contact between minds that will really bring the desired growth-process to pass? The problem is one that perhaps requires a restatement in the light of our thesis (p. 104) as to the relation between the mind's past experiences and its present perceptions. We have noted that the distinctive forms of one's accumulated experience-patterns make themselves felt as determinants of one's point of view—in that they supply *schemes of relationship and change* for all those elements of experience which they organize, and dispose one both to *notice* those and similar elements as they recur, and to *foresee their developments*, where another person, with a different past, would see and foresee quite differently. For example, a psychiatrist has as a deposit of his professional experience with adolescent boys a recognized pattern of interconnections between such diverse elements in boy-behavior as rapid growth between the thirteenth and fourteenth year, gawky motions, disposition to stay by himself, a change from dutiful, affectionate attitudes toward his mother to disobedience and rudeness, a marked disagreeableness toward girls, a drop in his school work, and bad sex-habits. With this mental scheme of interconnections for such items the psychiatrist views any given case of a "problem boy" with a peculiar awareness of these elements both as possibly present, and (if present) as amenable to certain courses of change. The boy's father, on the other hand, having more "common-

sense" patterns of boy-life in his background might quite overlook the possibility of sex-habits, and view the boy's sullenness, withdrawal, etc., as pretenses he was using to get out of work—a scheme of behavior-items that would point to a course of penalties and firmness. The boy's mother, with her memories of his years as a model child, and the boy's teacher, with her stock formulas for school failure, would have their own distinctive perceptions—each answering to apperceptive forms watermarked in the observer's mind.

For the case worker the problem here is not so much that of getting "the one true picture" from among these diverse views as of getting a common awareness, among the client group and its present allies, of their mutually supplementing perceptions and expectations. It is important, of course, that crude, or conventional, or sentimental, or over-moralistic pictures in people's heads shall be corrected, but it is perhaps more important that the people who are sharing a life-situation to be worked out shall be conscious of one another's ways of looking at it. The common picture that will "work" for mutual growth is a *stereoscopic* picture, in which all the elements, by getting *simultaneously* seen from different angles, "come alive" and stand out in their full *social dimensions*. Such a picture has a *social* truth that is something eventual—a matter not so much of present "facts" as of ensuing corroborations in terms of life-relationships made fruitful and satisfying.

In order to achieve for the whole client group this dynamic picture of their shared situation there must be sought for each key person in it some occasion, however momentary, in which he makes the necessary shift to see matters from another angle. This requires a contact between minds

such as leads one to assume another's point of view and thus to learn *how it feels to see as that person sees*. Once this has happened, the possibilities of "appropriate, integrated, and outreaching" responses between them are definitely furthered. But of course it does not happen without somebody's conscious concern to bring it about, and it is the case worker, in the interview relation, who may be said to improvise the "stereoscope" that gets things seen in their social dimensions. Her service is one of helping this and that person to effect a shift of vision that makes some demands on imaginative effort, and is beset with certain difficulties and resistances in people's minds. Just how she acts as this technician of seeing and responding may be followed in five case instances, each of which displays some difficult shift of view in the interview.

Case G. Difficulty from Over-Taxed Faith in the Expert

The Situation. A doctor apprised the visitor that a patient needed to remain longer in the hospital and to have another blood transfusion. The patient, Mrs. Farnsworth, a mother of three children, had been under medical care for three years, first for asthma and then for pernicious anemia. She had been once to a consumptives' and four times to a general hospital, besides having much treatment at home. Twice Mr. Farnsworth (and once a hospital doctor) had given blood for transfusions. During a period when the patient was too weak to go to the hospital for blood tests the doctors had performed this service regularly at her home.

The visitor was on terms of good understanding with the family, having previously accompanied Mrs. Farnsworth to the Dental Clinic over a period of two months, and having made vacation-camp arrangements for the children.

The patient was now in the hospital for the fifth time. She

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had caught cold there and her asthma, which had not troubled her since she developed anemia, reappeared. In order to relieve discomfort she was given an injection of adrenalin.

Money had been raised for another blood transfusion, but as she still grew worse, her husband insisted he would take her home because she "was being experimented with." This change in Mr. Farnsworth's attitude upset the patient, who felt she should go home lest he "take to drinking" (which he rarely did).

The Interview. On Mr. Farnsworth's opening the door the visitor greeted him. Mr. Farnsworth only grunted. "I've come from the doctor to talk about Mrs. Farnsworth." Again no response. Then Margaret, the oldest child, stepped forward, thus opening the door wider. The visitor spoke to Margaret and followed them into the kitchen where the table was set. Mr. Farnsworth sat down by the window and lit a cigarette.

VISITOR (*avoiding reference to Mr. Farnsworth's words with the doctor*): She tells the doctor she wants to come home. Can't you persuade her to stay and have another transfusion?

FARNSWORTH: No, if she wants to come, I'm going to bring her tomorrow. She was better off at home. There's nothing the matter with her blood, but they gave her an injection that brought back her asthma.

VISITOR: The tests showed her blood was already going down, and that was why we persuaded her to go to the hospital. The injection was not given until after she had developed asthma following a cold which she could easily have caught at home or elsewhere.

FARNSWORTH: Well, I've been talking to people and they say that those serum injections she got for the asthma are what caused the pernicious anemia. She was a healthy woman except for her asthma and after she had these treatments she got so sick she had to go to the hospital and they told her she had pernicious anemia. I gave her blood for two transfusions and if they'd let her alone after that she'd been all right, but this taking blood every week to make tests wore her blood all out. I think they're just experimenting on her.

(*He walks to the stove angrily and remains with his back to*

the visitor. Margaret comes over and sits on the arm of the visitor's chair. The two boys, with eyes open, listen intently.)

VISITOR: When she came to the hospital the first time, she was nearly dead. Without that first transfusion, she could not have lived to receive the serum treatment. We owe her life to the doctors that time at least. Even though doctors are interested in her from a scientific point of view, their first concern is to save her life, or at least prolong it. They wouldn't do anything risky or unhelpful to her just to see how it works. If doctors were only experimenting, they wouldn't be getting up at all hours of the night to see her or coming to your home in all kinds of weather. (*At this point Mr. Farnsworth turns around and stands looking earnestly at the worker.*) They have asked me if the money is provided to spare you the necessity of giving more blood. Let's see, how many transfusions would this one make?

FARNSWORTH: Four.

VISITOR: You gave two.

FARNSWORTH: The third time it was a doctor gave it.

VISITOR: To do that he must be either confident he is on the right track, or anxious to save his patient.

FARNSWORTH (*sitting down near the visitor, and speaking thoughtfully*): Oh yes, I realize she wouldn't be here today if I had not taken her to the hospital, and everybody has been very kind. I surely can't kick about her care in the hospital, but I thought they were interested because they were learning something from her.

VISITOR: Of course, they're learning something from her. Always while a doctor is caring for one patient he is learning something which will help him with some other—but all the time Mrs. Farnsworth has been benefiting by their study. (*To Margaret*) Can you get along without your mother for one week more if you know that she will probably come home much stronger at the end of that time?

MARGARET: Of course. We're getting along all right. We'd like to have mama home, but she's happy in the hospital.

VISITOR (*to Farnsworth*): While she is in the hospital, the doctors are responsible for her. If we bring her home, and she

doesn't live long, won't the children ask questions—when they are older? What will they feel about the responsibility we take without any knowledge of medicine?

FARNSWORTH: Well, a transfusion couldn't do her harm, and I suppose she would gain if she stayed a few days more, but if she wants to come home, I'll have to bring her home—that's all.

VISITOR: Well, if you see her this evening, it will set her mind at rest.

FARNSWORTH: Yes, I'll go right over in a few minutes and talk to her and tell her what you say.

(With a few words of advice to the children about sending out the wash, the visitor left. Later in the evening the husband said to the doctors, "She doesn't mind staying. She can stay as long as you advise." The patient was given the transfusion that same night. Her blood condition became better than it had been for five months and she returned home. After several months at home she was still well and happy.)

Instructive Points in Case G

1. **The Interviewee's Difficulty of Appropriate Response.** In this interview it was important that a man whose cooperation was needed in a case of serious sickness should comprehend a scientific point of view toward the case as a peculiarly exacting medical problem. For several reasons, however, his mind was unprepared for, and resistant to, the effort of seeing how the doctors saw the situation:

- (a) He was an uneducated artisan, quite ignorant of the nature and causes of his wife's malady, of the complications and set-backs to which it was liable, and of the operation of the measures that were being applied to its cure.
- (b) He was being subjected to a long-drawn-out tax on

his patience and pride in deferring to the judgment of doctors, whose opinions about his wife's needs were assumed to take precedence over his own. This slight to his self-feelings disposed him to believe something that would take the doctors off their pedestal and justify him in reasserting his family authority.

- (c) He was reinforced in this defense reaction by the neighborhood superstition—common to beneficiaries of free medical service—that doctors pay themselves for free patients by trying experiments on them.

2. The Case Worker's Help to His Change of View.

Except for a correction at the start on a misstated point of fact, the visitor avoided dispute with Mr. Farnsworth. She simply brought to his mind those aspects of the doctors' relations to his wife's sickness which displayed the nature of a scientific practitioner's concern. The kinds of thing they did—their first success, the pains they put themselves to in visiting her at night and in bad weather, their readiness to give their own blood in transfusion (note how the visitor drew this item from Farnsworth), the *responsibility* they assume with their authority—sketched out the medical man's way of life, and enabled the artisan family man to see why their view—in the *given circumstances*—could without disparagement to himself be given precedence over his own. It came to him as the view of men seeing and acting under a professional *code* and in a tradition of service. His own family case, and the cooperation asked of him, was being seen as both particularized—the problem of getting Mrs. Farnsworth well—and generalized: the *sort* of problem which the institution of medicine envisages.

Case H. Difficulty from Stock Response to a Domestic Pattern

The Situation. The family case here is the one already described on page 87 and characterized as that of "the home as a cushioned retreat for the man." Mrs. Smith, the wife, has faithfully managed the household for him and the child, and played the self-effacing rôle of a Patient Griselda to a husband who, although amiable and companionable, is irresponsible in money matters and selfishly extravagant. This relationship finally developed in her reactions of strain and desire to escape. At the time of the interview Mrs. Smith had already approached the agency for money with which to take her child to Pittsburgh, where she had the prospect of domestic work in the home of an acquaintance. The relatives of both man and woman lived at a distance and disapproved the husband's course.

The Interview. The client, shabby but attractive, came into the room accompanied by her little daughter, Milly. Her eyes were dilating with suppressed emotion, and though friendly she appeared diffident and nervous.

VISITOR: Good morning. Won't you sit down and I will see what plaything I can find for Milly. Here is a picture book for her to look at.

CLIENT: That will amuse her. She is an active child. Have you heard from Pittsburgh in regard to my friend?

VISITOR: No, I have not received any letter yet, and I could not help you go to a strange place unless we know more about it. You might be very unhappy.

CLIENT: I don't think I will be. It is a home, and I won't even care whether she pays me or not, if only Milly and I lie warm and have something to eat.

VISITOR: Do you mean to leave your husband quite alone?

CLIENT: He is a man, and if we are gone he ought to be able to look after himself. (*Bitterly*) He won't have to bother about us.

VISITOR: Whether you go or not, you need some clothes. Could you find a use for this suit and these blouses?

CLIENT (*gratefully*): I certainly will appreciate them. You see, I have not had anything new for years, as my husband never gave me money to spend for clothes. I made this coat, and it only cost \$3.00, and this little hat I made out of some velvet given me.

VISITOR: Your husband earned good salaries wherever he worked. Why didn't you have more clothes?

CLIENT: While he was earning the most, he only gave me \$15.00 a week for food and clothes. Out of this, I saved \$100.00 in one year. I paid my own hospital bills with it.

VISITOR: Why didn't he pay for them?

CLIENT: He said he did not have the money. (*Suddenly, as if taking a planned-out step*) What did my husband's employer say to you?

VISITOR (*frankly*): He told me that your husband was his own worst enemy; that he was not strictly honest, and was selfish and extravagant, although a good worker.

CLIENT (*bitterly*): It was working at Keppison's that ruined him. He spent money that was not his. He had every opportunity but threw it away and ruined us all. I am so ashamed (*Tears in eyes*).

VISITOR: Won't you tell me all about it if it will be a relief? You must have borne a lot that you have never told anyone. I'd like to help you.

CLIENT: Since you know all about things, I am going to keep silence no longer. I have stood by him through years of suffering, neglect and unkindness. He gambles. That is his fault (*guessed at by the visitor*). He always has done so. It has separated him from his family and caused him to wander in search of new adventures. He earned big money in the West, but he belonged to expensive clubs. He always spent the money on himself. I never asked for any, and tried to be a good wife, caring for him and making a comfortable home. He was even ashamed of me and would not take me out evenings. I haven't had any pleasures or pretty things for years. After he was dismissed by Keppison, he was months out of work, and we lost all the expensive furniture and the automobile he had paid hundreds of dollars down upon. I stood by him, although he

never had asked my advice about any step he took. I went to work as a waitress and when at last he got a job, I helped him save. He promised to reform. He promised me everything (*Client has been talking in an impassioned stream*).

VISITOR: You poor child. Did he do any better?

CLIENT: For a little while, but soon he was the same as ever, going out nights and buying candy for other girls. I never had anything but sacrifice.

VISITOR: Is this why you want to go away?

CLIENT: Yes (*frankly*). I want to leave him. I can't say I want to go forever, but maybe if I leave him it will bring him to his senses.

VISITOR: I suppose you still care for him.

CLIENT: Yes. But I don't respect him. What have I got to look forward to? He is getting older and his faults are more fixed. In ten years, where will I and my child be? Perhaps if I had a friend to talk to, I would know which way to turn.

VISITOR: I see you have had a hard life, but you married your husband for love, and have stuck to him in spite of his faults. Don't you feel, with his weakness, that it would be unsafe for you to leave him now?

CLIENT (*doubtfully*): Yes, I know I am the better manager, but still, have I not a right to my life?

VISITOR: Has the fault been all your husband's? Have you not been too gentle, too indulgent, too admiring, demanding too little, and standing too much? A man of Mr. Smith's stamp may need greater firmness, some insistence on showing consideration, less sacrifice on your part.

CLIENT (*thoughtfully*): Maybe that is so. Yes—(*after a pause*) perhaps I have been to blame. Also—(*suddenly*) I will go home and have a plain talk with my husband. You have given me courage, and I feel I have a friend now. If he does not do right, I will take action against him. I have been too easy.

VISITOR: You can believe that I will stand by you. Won't you come again tomorrow and let me know what you decide? And, by the way, don't you think we had better pay the month's rent which the landlord is pressing for? The money has been

given me by Mr. Smith's past employers, and it will keep you from worrying while you are deciding.

CLIENT: Yes. I think we should have the rent paid. You are so thoughtful.

The next morning Mrs. Smith came into the office saying: I have decided to give my husband another chance. We have talked it all over, and I don't feel it would be fair to leave him now in trouble.

VISITOR: Don't you want to go to Pittsburgh?

CLIENT: No. After talking with you, I saw things differently. You gave me courage. I shall take a different stand now. He has promised to take my advice and treat me more considerately.

VISITOR: I hope he will. Of course it will be a struggle for you both. He has been selfish and extravagant so long, and you have felt you must bear everything without talking it over.

CLIENT: May I come to see you often, and will you talk to my husband? It is so good to have a friend.

VISITOR: Come as often as you like, and I certainly will see Mr. Smith very soon.

CLIENT: I think everything is going to be better. I promise you I'll do my best to help to awaken my husband's sense of responsibility and will be more firm. Thank you so much.

Instructive Points in Case H

1. **The Interviewee's Difficulty.** Mr. Smith's irresponsibility and wanderings, together with the fact that his own and his wife's kin live at a distance and have been disapproving of his course, would leave this couple rather isolated socially, out of touch with the kind of friendly criticism that would dispose them to think over their way of life and test their standards of marital relationship. As a result, the weakest elements in the conduct of each—the man's self-indulgence and inconsiderateness, and the wife's almost maternal acquiescence in his "spoiled child" rôle—had be-

come habitual. Mrs. Smith had "rationalized" her own rôle as a model case of domestic unselfishness. "I never asked for money, and tried to be a good wife, caring for him and making a comfortable home"—and this even in the face of his neglect of her and attention to other women. Such a view of her situation put everything into a moralistic light and over-simplified its deeper problems. It displayed one person as irresponsible, extravagant, selfish, belittling his mate; the other as faithful, well-managing, self-effacing, patient under slights and neglect. So envisaged it naturally appeared as a situation that admitted only one sort of solution: either continued acquiescence or an escape. What Mrs. Smith needed was a shift of view that would put things into a more psychological and clinical light, displaying the mechanisms of motivation in her married life and inviting a mutual reeducation for self-respecting companionship. Naturally this view was not one she could assume without help. It was one in which she ceased to figure as a copy-book model of the domestic martyr and became a "character-problem" herself—needing attention to mistaken attitudes which were obstructing the growth of a really sound family relationship.

2. The Worker's Help to the Client's Shift of View.

In the course of the talk between worker and client one notes that the change in Mrs. Smith's outlook on her problem came with a change in her relationship with the worker. Let us follow the latter development first. Mrs. Smith came to the agency with a plan of her own, and expecting simply money-help to carry it out. The worker (as is disclosed later) had in fact secured money for her from her husband's employers, but was seeking to delay her departure, hoping that a good talk might give the problem a better turn. She

was therefore negative with regard to the railroad fare, but at once balanced the disappointment by an unrequested gift of clothes. This put the client in a position of having gained something by coming, and—as a positive mark of concern for a woman without friends and accustomed to neglect—led her to “open her heart.” Still further ground for her confiding in the worker was the latter’s frankly stated knowledge of Mr. Smith’s failings, her institutional position as representing the welfare agency, her larger-than-personal relation to the personal problem, and her “problem attitude”—suggesting that confidences would be respected. As the outpouring of heart is met with sympathetic interest Mrs. Smith finds herself talking to the worker not simply as one who “knows all about things” but as a friend, as one who gives her courage. The development here illustrates what is called “circular response.” The client was doing something by which she actively *disposed herself* to see things differently. And after doing with her husband what she here resolved she came back further disposed to see the worker not only as a friend, but as one whose continued presence in the situation would be helpful to the husband as well.

The change in Mrs. Smith’s outlook on her problem seemed to be immediately occasioned by the worker’s suggestion that her acquiescent devotedness and non-assertion of herself had been contributory to her unhappy situation. This suggestion was another instance of “direction” (cf. p. 153)—a *redirection* of the *manner of beholding* the whole affair. Mrs. Smith was being helped to shift the point of view from which she contemplated it and to *redefine* it in terms no longer of domestic self-sacrifice but of mutuality of satisfaction and growth in a marital career. The

situation now, instead of appearing one in which Mrs. Smith figured as a praiseworthy sufferer with no way of bettering matters except escape, became in her own eyes one which, having been aggravated by her own conduct, was in some measure within her control. Where she had been proposing an impulsive act which would have brought but a temporary respite from worries, she now saw a possibility of improving the relation between herself and husband, and of doing it, moreover, with the approval and participation of a representative outsider. This "gives her courage." The paying of the rent affords a further reassurance that staves off hasty decisions. Coming from the man's past employers, it can be expected to stimulate him rather than to lessen his self-respect, as "relief" money might, and it also paves the way for the worker's talk with him.

This is the first of these cases in which the client takes an important step on her own initiative. It was Mrs. Smith's idea that she talk with her husband and she evidently planned what to say to him. The worker had helped her to think, to find for herself a way out that was "constructive." The level of response in the interview thus approaches that of two intelligent and, so far as one may judge, stable persons thinking together. The thinking, the discovering of a course to follow, and the change from emotional tenseness to courage, all appear as different aspects of the same process. Emotionally, no doubt, the process was much facilitated by the *relationship* developed between client and worker in the interview. The lessened anxiety strains, the felt presence of a *shared* inspection of the problem, the warmth of a rising affection when the client feels the worker to be according the powers and sympathy of a full-summed personality to this shared experience—all operate to foster

a state of "readiness" in the client's mind, so that the directive suggestion, although coming from the worker, comes as an insight not thrust in from without, but kindling at once into revelations that become creatively the client's own.

Case I. Difficulty from Conflicting Culture-Patterns

The Situation. A visitor from a child-placing agency called on a Syrian father, Mr. Rutjian, whose daughter Emma desired to take that High School course which would prepare her for Normal School later. The girl's instructors had encouraged her ambition to become a teacher, and a psychiatrist who was consulted corroborated their estimate of her qualifications. Influenced, however, by her father's wish that she be able to earn immediately on graduation, and unaware of the limitations of a commercial course, Emma had selected the latter line of study.

For five years following the death of their mother Emma and her brother had been in the care of this agency. Their father had recently married a second wife from Syria, and had taken the children back into his own home. The stepmother appeared an intelligent woman, well-educated in her own country, and was learning to speak English. Emma seemed to like her. During the years in a foster home, however, this girl had become so accustomed to American ways that she had been dreading the return to a foreign atmosphere. The foster mother had also taken this tone until the worker, Miss McCabe, pointed out to her what she was doing to the children's self-respect and to their family relationship. This provincialism on the part of the foster mother perhaps only confirmed influences that had been about the children in a small American town. For instance, they had been going by the foster mother's name because their own name excited comment and ridicule.

Mr. Rutjian himself had been in the United States for seven years and during that time had learned English, had built up a good business of his own, and was in prospect of supporting

his family in comfort. His view of the situation and the visitor's differed in that he felt she did not understand his financial condition, whereas she felt that his prospects were such that he could afford Normal School for his girl. He however appreciated that whereas he knew little about American schools, she was thoroughly informed as to courses, requirements, etc.

Through being on her vacation when the children returned home, Miss McCabe had never met the stepmother. She therefore called at Mr. Rutjian's shop shortly before noon, hoping he would invite her to the house to meet Mrs. Rutjian, and thus to reopen the question of Emma's school plans.

The Interview. With a cordial greeting Mr. Rutjian placed a chair for the visitor near him so that he might talk while he finished the work he was doing. He inquired about her vacation, and answered questions regarding the children's welfare and their relationship with the stepmother. The visitor learned that they were all becoming friendly together and that the stepmother managed them better than the father himself did. Nothing was said regarding Emma's course at school. Upon finishing his work Mr. Rutjian asked Miss McCabe if she had been at the house, and shutting up the shop, invited her to accompany him. On the way home she inquired as to what school each child would attend, how far the schools and church were from the home, and how interested each child seemed in both. Arrived at the house they found the younger child just returned. Miss McCabe, to show an interest in the home and wife, admired some embroidered scarfs on the table. As she had suspected, they proved to be the stepmother's work. This led to Mrs. Rutjian's bringing out other exquisite bits of embroidery and the two women devoted several moments to discussing the various color schemes and stitches displayed. Mr. Rutjian's face reflected a pleasure in seeing his wife's talent recognized. In the midst of this Emma returned home, greeted Miss McCabe, and presently showed two pieces of her own embroidery. The visitor noticed that Emma's eyes rested with admiration on her stepmother's handiwork and it was evident that the latter held Emma's respect in that line at least. At this point, as the day was hot, Mrs. Rutjian excused herself to pre-

pare a cool drink. Miss McCabe then asked Emma whether she had been able to get transferred to the right grade of school. Emma replied that she had got into the right grade, but that it had been necessary to choose between taking a commercial course or an academic one.

VISITOR: Which did you choose?

EMMA: The commercial.

VISITOR: Why, I thought you intended going to Normal School.

EMMA: I do intend to go to Normal School, but papa thought I had better take the commercial course in High School.

VISITOR (*turning to Mr. Rutjian*): Why did you think it best for her to take the commercial course? Do you really think you will not be able to send her to Normal School?

FATHER: If she take commercial course, she can get position. Earn money right away. Why Normal School any better?

EMMA (*looking surprised*): Couldn't I get into Normal School unless I take the normal course?

VISITOR: You probably could get admitted to Normal School with any high school diploma, but the commercial course would not be a good preparation for it, and the normal school course would hardly be worth taking in that case, for a really good teacher ought to know much more about history, literature and languages than any commercial course allows time for.

EMMA: Oh, will you go with me and ask the principal if I can change, because I know he won't let me unless someone goes with me.

VISITOR: If your father wants me to, but he may have some reason for wanting you to keep to the course you have already chosen.

(*Just then Mrs. Rutjian reappeared with a delicious orange concoction.*)

VISITOR (*turning again to the father*): What do you really think about this idea of Normal School?

FATHER: Well, what do you think?

VISITOR: It seems that Emma is more likely to succeed as a teacher than in office work, and it's a pity to put her into work which she will not like, unless you can't afford the other. You

know the tuition is free at Normal School and the books are furnished by the State, so that your only expense would be her board and clothing and car-fare for three more years. She could help herself quite a bit working summers.

MR. RUTJIAN (*turning to Emma*): What do you want to do about it?

EMMA: I want to change to the academic because I am sure I want to teach.

VISITOR (*to draw the stepmother into the discussion*). How does Mrs. Rutjian feel about it? (*Miss McCabe had endeavored throughout to speak slowly and distinctly hoping that the stepmother might get at least the drift of the talk. She had judged from the expression on the stepmother's face that the latter was following fairly well. A rapid conversation in Syrian then followed between the father and stepmother.*)

FATHER (*to visitor*): She say let Emma take course she wants.

VISITOR (*fearing from the look on Mr. Rutjian's face that in spite of his acquiescence he was not satisfied with the decision*): You know it is possible at about the end of the third year to change from the academic course to the commercial, but one cannot change from the commercial to the academic. So if Emma starts in on the commercial now she will have to give up the prospect of a normal school course, while if she takes the academic now she can change her mind three years from now if at that time you feel that the expense of Normal School is going to be too much.

(*Mr. Rutjian looked evidently relieved, and added his second to Emma's repeated query: "Will you please go with me to see the principal?" Taking leave of the household, with their warm invitations to come again soon, the visitor departed with Emma to the school, where no difficulty was met in changing her to the desired course.*)

Instructive Points in Case I

1. The Situation Occasioning the Interview. The persons taking active part in this interview are four—the

husband and father making good in an alien country, the wife having to adapt herself to unfamiliar surroundings at every turn, the bright daughter absorbing "Americanism," the visitor, trusted by father and daughter, and recognizing certain dangers to family self-respect and unity. The situation itself must be thought of as including, in addition to the attitudes of and between these persons, the dark coloring and the name of these Syrians that made their "foreignness" conspicuous—with effects on the attitudes of foster-mother, neighbors, and schoolmates in a small town—and the institutional responsibility of a child-placing agency continuing supervision. It is defined by the need of a school-girl to get her chance for congenial vocation, but to get it in a way to keep the unity and self-respect of the family as Syrians. Here is a double purpose, a closer situation within one more far-reaching—the whole being complex because the attitudes stirred in dealing with the more immediate need will figure in the realizing, or frustrating, of the more basic family need. The "circuit" making the subsidiary situation a unit of thought and treatment is completed by the father's agreement that Emma change to an academic course. As to the broader objective, the present interview is but one step toward a fulfilment that might mean a fairly long contact with this family on the part of the same or some other agency, such as a Neighborhood House.

2. **The Worker's Interview Technique.** Leadership in the interview relation here hardly required the art of managing emotional factors and developing directive suggestions that was requisite in the preceding cases, where clients were bringing prejudiced or perturbed attitudes to their own problems. In this case the worker's part was simplified by the following circumstances:

- (a) She already had a completely satisfactory *rapport* with the father, owing to her previous service in supervising the foster-care of his children, and to the friendly understanding which had thus grown up between them.
- (b) The immediate decision as to Emma's course at the High School turned mainly on *adequate information* as to the nature of the school alternatives, viewed with respect to their vocational sequels, and the father was quite ready to accept the worker's "say-so" on the requirements of an American school system.
- (c) The danger to family unity from a Syrian-American culture-conflict was only incipient, and neither father nor daughter realized that it would be accentuated when the girl became a teacher—identified with the Americanizing ideas of the public schools.

Even with these advantages Miss McCabe was careful to make her approaches to the immediate issue such as touched those general concerns of the family in which they figured as self-directing and as to which she was not expecting to take the rôle of an advisor. Any advantages over the Rutjians which she had in being in her native country and probably in being better educated than they, were well in the background. In the father's talk about his wife's good management and about his new home he could show just pride in the success of his re-marriage; in showing the new apartment he and his wife could indulge the harmless vanity of the householder in comforts and conveniences that are among the symbols of successful status. When the visitor took pains to be introduced into the newcomer's

home, she was treating her more as the wife of a friend than as the client of an agency whose purposes and methods were of course wholly unfamiliar to an immigrant. In the latter capacity and under her language handicap, Mrs. Rutjian would have felt the visitor's advantage over her, whereas in the former she was hostess. When Miss McCabe timed her visit so that all the family might be present she was making an opportunity to let both Emma and her parents see the respect in which she held the latter, and especially her respect for the Syrian training of the stepmother. The embroidered table covers, produced by Syrian handiwork and taste, represented skill in which she could learn from Mrs. Rutjian, and the orange beverage instanced another skill in the rôle of hostess. Even when, toward the latter part of the call, Miss McCabe became necessarily the leader in discussing institutional resources and local living conditions, she was careful to defer to the father and the stepmother as being persons of judgment, as well as Emma's responsible guardians. From beginning to end this interview with its rather simple immediate purpose, was influencing attitudes of status, and the method was that of finding ways to show respect for its really valid symbols. The visitor helped to shape this situation in the home, so that major social values assumed their right place.

During the last part of the call, and in behalf of the immediate purpose of schooling, persuasion figures. Its success is based on confidence in the visitor and her agency, and (one would guess) also on her own good judgment in not urging this confidence. The process consists in giving certain definite information about the girl's educational opportunities and their cost that is new to Mr. Rutjian and that goes to offset the pecuniary aspects of his daughter's

plans that he had stressed. It was for the parents themselves to come to a decision. Miss McCabe made sure they did it with a full awareness of what was at stake.

Case J. Difficulty from Previously Established Misresponse

The Situation. A medical social worker, Miss Manley, visited a police station to learn what success the police had had in locating the alleged father of an illegitimate baby born at the hospital she served. She had called at the station several times before with the same purpose. Since the man was working for a nearby concern with which he had been connected for five years, it looked as if the police were not exerting themselves.

The mother of the child was a sixteen-year-old girl, herself motherless, who was keeping house for her father, brother and sister. The family were self-respecting people, the father and sister being employed in a local factory. Since this income was barely sufficient for the family needs, the girl's father had taken out a warrant for the arrest of the alleged father of the baby. As time passed with no arrest the family became increasingly anxious, and Miss Manley decided to try again to interest the police.

The interview took place in the main room of the local police station. There were present the captain at his desk and two officers seated talking at the back of the room.

The Interview.

WORKER (*entering the station and recognising the officer with whom she had spoken previously when on the same errand*): Good morning, Mr. Ryan. Have you heard anything about Brown, the man we're interested in?

RYAN (*without rising, chewing tobacco, and tilting his chair backwards*): Nope, nothin' doin'!

(*The captain at the desk looked up and recognizing the worker appeared to say to himself: "Here's that fool woman again."*)

WORKER (*to the officer*): Well, I guess I'll speak with the captain. (*Approaching the desk*) Good morning, Captain Clark.

CAPTAIN (*also without rising*): Morning.

WORKER (*feeling herself becoming angry, questioned the captain as to methods of locating men wanted by the court, and a half-hearted conversation ensued. Then realizing the futility of anger*): I presume charges like larceny and automobile thefts would take precedence over the charge of an unlocated father.

CAPTAIN (*slowly and dryly*): Oh, well, I don't know.

(*A door slammed and Miss Manley, turning, recognized Officer Drake, with whom she had previously worked on other cases. She left the captain's desk and went up to him.*)

WORKER: Good morning, Officer Drake.

DRAKE (*cordially, with a "what-are-you-doing-here" manner*): Good morning, Miss Manley.

WORKER: I am still anxious to locate the alleged father of my little patient. Just imagine, Officer, this girl is only sixteen years old, unmarried, with a baby, and without a mother, but with the responsibility of caring for a home, cooking meals, and added to that the care of an infant. Are any of you men married? Have you any families?

(*At this point, most of the hats were off, the gum and tobacco had been removed, and the other officers had risen and approached to join the conversation.*)

DRAKE: Sure, I've got four kids.

WORKER: Any girls? A great responsibility this, of raising a family, isn't it? Well, think how hard it would be to have these children left motherless and open to all sorts of temptations. Here's where we have to look to you people for protection and help to see that the law is enforced where necessary.

CAPTAIN (*leaving his desk, removing his hat, and addressing the worker*): What d'you say about this fellow?

(*Miss Manley gave in some detail the story of the young girl under the wing of their own station house, who was pregnant by a man living in the same neighborhood.*)

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WORKER: It does seem a pity that this man can't be located especially with the definite local home and business ties he has.

CAPTAIN: Well, now, Miss Manley, I think we can do something about this. Let's look and see what happened.

(The captain then looked through his ledger. He found that on October tenth Officer Ryan made a call at the home of the alleged father, was told by his mother that he had been away from home for two weeks and that she understood his work had been transferred to some other city. Her information was indefinite. Miss Manley surmised that no further effort had been made to locate him.)

CAPTAIN: G'wan around there again, Ryan, and see what you can make out of it.

WORKER *(after thanking the captain and Officer Ryan)*: I know you will be able to get him now that you realize what it means to this little girl. There must be many ways you have of getting information and clues that help locate people.

OFFICER RYAN *(straightening up)*: Oh, yes, there are; we'll get him all right.

WORKER *(turning to the captain)*: I realize I have been quite a nuisance by my frequent inquiries and visits here.

CAPTAIN *(heartily)*: Not at all, Miss Manley, not at all. Come in any time. Glad to serve you. *(He throws out his chest and sits down.)* That's what we're here for. Your own work must be very interesting. What about these unmarried girls? What do you do with them? Where do they come from? What happens to the kids?

WORKER: They come from everywhere—Canada, the South, in and out of the city. We try to get prenatal and maternity care for the patient and support from the alleged father—that's where your part of it comes in, in helping us. We try to re-establish them with their relatives or in good foster homes or in places to work with their babies where they can be most helped to usefulness.

(The men were much interested. They seemed pleased at discovering that they had an important part to play in rehabilitating unmarried mothers and their babies, and one and all were cordial in their adieus.)

CAPTAIN: We'll let you know, Miss Manley, when we have any clues.

WORKER: I will drop in again during the week.

CAPTAIN (*in tones indicating he did not want to put the worker to that trouble*): No, no, Miss Manley, we'll call you.

(*Two days later Miss Manley answered a telephone call from the station.*)

RYAN: Officer Ryan speaking, Miss Manley. We've got your man.

WORKER: Oh, Mr. Ryan, that's splendid! Well, I knew if he were around you'd get him.

RYAN: Please be in court tomorrow morning, Miss Manley, I think Judge Bates will preside and he is interested in that sort of a case. I guess everything will be all right.

Instructive Points in Case J

1. The Special Difficulty in the Interview Relation.

Miss Manley's problem here lay evidently in the antagonistic attitudes of the first three officers. Since she had come to the station several times before on the same errand, the trouble seems due—in part, at least—to the way these previous visits had been conducted.

It is to be noted that in the present interview the worker gives the officers the particulars of the girl's case *for the first time*. Her other calls, then, may have amounted to a mere jogging of them to carry out the court's directions, and this they would be quick to feel. In so far as she evidenced an assumption that the situation as a whole was none of their affair, that no contribution to its understanding was expected of them, that their part in it was confined to one routine duty—these public officials would on the one hand fail to become interested, and on the other might feel their dignity of position slighted, and their personal self-esteem a bit humiliated.

This earnest and devoted worker, in not taking these men into her confidence sooner, illustrated what a client-centered concern may do to a case. She was absorbed in helping her appealing young client—that is clear from the sympathy with which she describes the girl's need—and she failed to recognize that along with the girl's attitudes and needs went concurrently certain attitudes of the police who needed to find satisfaction in cooperating. Thinking client-wise she lost sight of the police as integral in the situation. The course of the interview suggests that they felt this, though of course they would have expressed it differently.

Affecting the immediate relation between Miss Manley and these policemen may have been a ready-formed conception on their part of social workers as reforming busybodies. The training of workers aims to give them a more enlightened social outlook than is usual in the minor public official. This may make the latter hyper-sensitive in detecting what they interpret as evidences of a sense of superiority. One notes the pleasure shown by the policemen at being recognized as important.

2. The Worker's Corrective Tact. The entrance of the officer with whom Miss Manley was already on friendly terms relieved a tense moment. The three policemen in the station had tried to cover a neglect of duty by rudeness—a position from which it was not easy to withdraw with dignity. Miss Manley was in danger of having to leave with her errand undone, and her influence for this and future cases impaired. She by her first mode of approach, and the officers by their defensive response, had each taken a tone that somewhat humiliated the other. Officer Drake's cordial respect for Miss Manley afforded her an opening to present an appealing story, and by so doing to show the warmth of

sympathy with a pitiful need that had led her to press for the alleged father's arrest. This was no reforming duty-prodder. The entry of a new person, not involved in the embroilment, had enabled the worker to change her mode of approach and the officers to become well-mannered without embarrassment or apologies. It is to be noted that Miss Manley, addressing first Officer Drake, turned quickly to include the other three, and this time took definite pains to recognize them as co-workers on the case, and with an immediate favorable response. As the talk went on she was able to give them some information about the care of unmarried mothers that they might from time to time be in a position to use. This sort of educational spread of ideas is an important part of the case worker's function in any community, and is inherent in the situation as a treatment unit.

Case K. Difficulty from Unawakened Zest for Use of One's Powers

The First Contact. A Mrs. Jones called with a friend at the office of a child-placing agency to inquire whether and how she could get a little girl to board in her home. Agencies that care for children in foster homes must investigate every such home to make sure that it affords the essential conditions for a child's development. The better equipped agencies employ special "home-finders" for this important service. Mrs. Jones, therefore, was seen by the home-finder of the agency she called upon—a Miss Bellmap. The day of her call being a busy one, the interview took place in an alcove off the main corridor of the building and opposite an elevator. People were passing constantly, though they could not hear what was said. The surroundings did not encourage confidences, and in any case the presence of Mrs. Jones's friend would have checked any intimate talk.

Summary of the First Interview. From a twenty-minute conversation Miss Belknap learned that Mrs. Jones was a likeable, jolly woman, that she lived in a progressive community known for its excellent special class for backward children, that she was a college graduate who before marriage had been a Girl Scouts leader, that since marriage she had done volunteer work for the Red Cross, and that first and last she had learned enough about social problems to want to keep her own family from entanglement with the unpleasant situations such problems sometimes present. Her husband was a contractor with a shop in his back yard. He had a common school education, was active in his church and in a fraternal order. Both he and his wife were baseball "fans."

Mrs. Jones expressed surprise that children were not kept at the building, and hesitated to go further when she found it was not customary to allow new foster mothers to see children before they took them. The work of a child-placing agency was explained to her. She was told that a great part of it was with such problems as those of delicate babies, unmarried mothers with infants, or difficult boys who need sympathetic study and training. Although this excited her warm interest, the interview closed with her saying that under no conditions would she take a child she had not seen, or one whose parents were likely to be critical or to visit it often. As for any disciplinary problem she did not want to spoil the peace of her household by fussing with a naughty child. If the society ever had a little girl between three and nine of Anglo-Saxon blood, she would be glad to come to the office to see her. When she learned that she would be asked to fill out a blank that called for references, she withdrew her application. This the visitor regretted, since all the indications were that her home would be an excellent place for a child.

It is the experience of placing-out agencies that whereas many people are ready to take children who present no serious problem, few are prepared to undertake more exacting child care for the small pay offered. The task of the home-finding visitor is therefore, first, to discover people capable of handling the problems such children involve, and second, to per-

suade these people to assume so considerable a responsibility.

The Interview Two Weeks Later. Miss Belknap made an afternoon call at Mrs. Jones' house. On her reminding Mrs. Jones who she was, her hostess invited her into the sunny, orderly dining-room of a pleasant suburban home. Miss Belknap assumed the attitude of a caller, avoiding any appearance of haste or pressure of work.

MRS. JONES: Well, I suppose you have come about the little girl. I did not expect to hear from you again, so I did not let you know that Mr. Jones and I decided not to do anything until spring about a child.

VISITOR: I did not come about a little girl at all. I suppose I am on a wild goose chase. I am in need of a home for a special child and it occurred to me that you might help me find it. We have a little boy who is worrying us very much.

MRS. JONES: Oh, we could not take a boy anyway. Mr. Jones would never hear of it, I know, because we lost a little boy who would be five next month, and it breaks him all up even to see a little neighbor's boy playing in our yard.

VISITOR: I did not believe you would be interested yourselves, but this little boy needs special care and I am anxious to use the school for backward children that you have in this town. Our psychiatrist is not sure whether or not he is subnormal for he has been living under such miserable conditions that he has had no opportunity to develop normally at all.

MRS. JONES: I suppose you have to take all kinds of children.

VISITOR: Yes, we do. This boy was referred to us by the Court, and came to the Court's attention because he had been stealing fruit, etc., with a gang of boys that run wild in the neighborhood.

MRS. JONES: Perhaps he was hungry. Children will always steal between meals if they are not fed properly.

VISITOR: Well, there is no doubt that he was not fed properly with no mother at home, and he really has learned a good many bad habits that have to be controlled before we can do much for him. If I could get him into the special class here where he would have individual attention, I believe it is possible to save him to be a useful citizen.

(Then followed a short discussion about the boy's habits and lack of training.)

MRS. JONES: I am sure I do not know who around here would take him.

(She ran over the names of her neighbors, giving the objections she had to each one. She inquired into the cause of his mother's death and readily agreed with the visitor that wherever the boy went his father should be encouraged to visit him.)

VISITOR: His father would pay four dollars a week to the office and we will provide all his clothing, etc., above that.

MRS. JONES: Goodness, that is very little, isn't it. It really is barely enough to cover his food alone. I should think it was a real charity for four dollars a week.

VISITOR: That is just it. It is charity to take a child at that rate but what a satisfaction to take a little street boy like this and make something out of him. We really could never pay anyone enough to do it unless they loved a child.

(Mrs. Jones then went on to tell of the success her husband had had with a dishonest boy in his shop. Experiences with dishonest children were exchanged and Miss Belknap led the conversation to modern methods of training and educating backward children. She explained the careful medical supervision of the agency, and Mrs. Jones suddenly began to talk about the illness of the child she had lost. Finally they came back to the original question of who in the special class district would take the boy. Mrs. Jones could think of nobody and the interview seemed about over when Miss Belknap remarked that the task was doubly hard since the boy was a little foreign-looking, although his mother was American.)

VISITOR: What he needs is someone to keep him clean and mended and take a little pains to make a man out of him. You would be surprised what a difference a good hair cut and a new suit of clothes makes in a boy. I suppose he would have to be taught from the very beginning to keep himself clean, ordinary table manners, etc.

MRS. JONES: All boys are like that.

(The visitor noticed that Mrs. Jones was beginning to take the boy's part, intimating that Miss Belknap expected too much

in asking that a boy keep himself clean without supervision.)

MRS. JONES: It is possible that Mr. Jones would be willing I should try him for a short time, at least to start him in school. If you would telephone me in the morning, I will talk it over with my husband tonight.

VISITOR: I do not want to over-persuade you. I should be glad to have you take him, but I am not sure that you want to do it.

MRS. JONES: Well, it does seem as if somebody should help the child. With his present habits he really should not go where there are other little children anyway. I should expect your visitor to keep in close touch with me while he was here, and if I found I could not manage him you would have to take him away.

VISITOR: All right, and if you decide to try him, will you send in this blank? It is very simple, as you see, and with four hundred children we have to be very careful where we send them. It isn't unreasonable in most cases to ask for three references and we do not like to make exceptions to that rule.

MRS. JONES: Of course, you must be careful. I think it a big responsibility to let anybody take a child. When I think what might happen to a little backward boy like this, I positively shiver.

(Mr. Jones came to the office next day, bringing the filled-out application blank and saying that they would take the boy on trial.)

Instructive Points in Case K

1. **The Special Interview-Problem.** In this case, as in Case J, the worker's interview was not with a client but with one (or more) of the potential allies of her agency in dealing with a need-situation. The obstacle to Mrs. Jones's participation in the sort of child-guidance relationships that Miss Belknap was seeking lay in the fact that her interest arose from a very different picture of what those relationships would be like. Mrs. Jones had the picture of a well-

behaved little Anglo-Saxon in the home, of a "nice" little girl whose parents would not interfere—in short, of a home-and-child situation offering a maximum of immediate personal satisfactions and a minimum of strains and risks of failure. The picture to be faced was of a misbehaving, foreign-looking, possibly sub-normal boy in the home, whose father would call frequently—in short, of a home-child-parent-fosterparent-agency situation offering little for the more conventional sort of domestic complacency, but much for the exercise of insights and skills, and for the creative satisfactions that are realized where a child's growth-possibilities are brought from unpromising beginnings to definitely creditable endings. Mrs. Jones was able to make this shift of view because she really had the powers for exercising this exacting sort of child guidance, and needed but little stimulation to awaken her zest for dealing with life-issues truly worthy of her mettle. The step meant an enlarging vista of experience for herself and her husband. Instead of allowing the loss of their own child to make them shrink from encountering reminders of their grief, to make them become inward-turning, they were putting themselves in a position to turn disappointed affection into a well of helpfulness for other little boys.

2. **The Worker's Leadership in the Interview Relation.** In the second interview Miss Belknap had deliberately sought to lessen the chances of inhibiting influences. So far as she could, she had staged the setting. She called at the Jones's home, and by going in the afternoon, when an up-and-coming housewife would probably have reached a lull in her duties, made more likely the leisureliness of conversation that might help reshape Mrs. Jones's desires as regarded the taking of a foster child. The situation, initiated

by the latter's rather tentative wish for a boarding-child, became gradually defined by the home-finder's need of securing an especially good foster family. The circuit making it a unit of thought and treatment was completed by the Joneses' agreeing to take a child that especially needed their sort of home.

Throughout the interview Miss Belknap "led" in the sense, first, that she knew what she wanted Mrs. Jones to want more clearly than the latter knew her own wishes, and second that she knew in detail and with accuracy the problems and methods of child-placing. Her clearer purpose, her experience and pertinent knowledge enabled her to precede Mrs. Jones in conceiving the possibilities that lay in the situation. Her "technique," however, had no element of crude "salesmanship." Indeed, one may feel that her forthright candor should not be spoken of as "technique" at all. She minimized no difficulties and held out no engaging compensations. But she was paying Mrs. Jones the compliment of recognizing her intelligence and stamina as a person quite equal to the demands of life. And by leading the talk to modern methods of training backward children she was not only interesting and reassuring her listener. She was beginning a relationship between her agency and this foster home which would grow into a fruitful comradeship of effort.

SUMMARY ON THE INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE

In Chapter V we were introduced to the "interview" in case work as an episode of give-and-take between a worker and an interviewee cooperatively seeking to better their own and each other's view of the case picture. In general aim the worker's leadership in the interview relation is like that

of a discussion-leader, simply facilitating good thinking by getting all the situation factors simultaneously seen and by inducing more objective attitudes toward the common problem. Actually the process is often beset with extreme emotional and other difficulties (e. g., of time-demand) which may require dealings for the moment on a less mature level. Difficulties of dissociated attitudes (especially resentment), self-centeredness, and inability to "face facts" are illustrated in Cases D, E, and F.

In the present chapter we have tried to study more closely the peculiar interstimulations and enrichments of vision and response that people can win from the interview. Since each party to the matter discussed sees it in forms set by his own past, he tends to be limited and conditioned in his imagination as to its possible developments. What is needed, therefore, in their contacts of mind, is a mutually developed sort of "stereoscopic" picture, in which all the elements, by getting *simultaneously* seen from the different angles, stand out in their full social dimensions and elicit socially appropriate responses. It is the worker's part in the interview relation to help bring about the shifts of vision by which people take the situation in, each in the terms that have validity for the others. This requires of her a special sort of leadership in tact and imagination, since the process is beset with thwarts and resistances in the best of minds. Various kinds of interview difficulty and instructive points in their handling are illustrated in Cases G to K. Certain of these deserve listing here by way of summary; namely—

- (1) The effort to see a privately personal matter from the viewpoint of an institutional code (p. 160 f.).
- (2) The need of shifting from a moralistic and oversimplifying to a clinical manner of approach (p. 166).

- (3) The principle of "circular response" (p. 167).
- (4) The principle of "directive suggestion" (pp. 153 and 167).
- (5) The possibilities of help to the client arising from a special emotional *rappport* in the interview relation (p. 168 f.).
- (6) The complications of differing backgrounds in racial culture (p. 173).
- (7) Miscarriage of the case-process through "client-centeredness" (p. 180).
- (8) The appeal of a shift from easier to harder experience-levels where the latter uses awakening powers (p. 186).

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES ON CHAPTERS V AND VI

A very inclusive study of interviewing will be found in Pauline Young's *Interviewing in Social Work: a Sociological Analysis* (McGraw-Hill, 1935). It gives (1) detailed consideration of interview techniques; (2) specimen interviews, with marginal analyses of the techniques used and of the data sought (pp. 198-212; 220-235); (3) interview records for study and analysis (pp. 359-375); and (4) suggested questions and exercises which may supplement those that follow here.

1. Read a case record and make a written note on each point where an important interview occurred, saying what *kind* of interview it was, as defined by its specific purpose (e. g., as to the kind of information sought, or the influence on the interviewee that was desired). At what points did a successful interview occur? At what points did the interview appear unsuccessful?
2. What evidence do you meet that a case-work interviewer needs to know something about such ideas as *rappport*, *identification*, *transference*, *suggestibility*, *pathological lying*?
3. What does she need to know about special *cultural backgrounds* of interviewees: e. g., Negro, Jewish, Mexican, Polish, Greek?
4. In interviewing "collateral sources" (relatives, employers,

etc.), what difference does it make whether the worker seeks simply *information* about a client, or aims to get the whole situation as they see it, and the *attitudes* that indicate their relations to it?

5. Read a fully recorded interview (e. g., one in Mrs. Young's book) and criticize the worker's handling of it. Thus—
 - (a) Were her questions well addressed to elicit the needed information?
 - (b) Were they tactful?
 - (c) Did she follow up clues which appeared in the interviewee's talk?
 - (d) Did the *place* of the interview or other circumstances affect it favorably or unfavorably?
6. In cases D to K, which of the following features of a "dissociated attitude" created difficulties in the interview—and at what points?—
 - (a) Its insistence on taking immediate precedence of all other claims in the situation;
 - (b) Its association with a sense of inadequacy;
 - (c) Its relation to fatigue and undervitalization;
 - (d) Its effect in limiting sensitiveness and the range of awareness;
 - (e) Its tendency to induce answering partial responses and thus to defeat integrations of purpose.
7. In your own experience can you cite conversations in which a *prejudice* operated as a "dissociated attitude"—e. g., in its character as uncritically upheld, in its repetitive manifestation, regardless of differences in the matter it is applied to, in its emotional modes of assertion—with rationalizing and other defense reactions by which it is made resistant to modifying?

CHAPTER VII

WHEN HAS THE CASE SITUATION BEEN "SOLVED"?

The preceding chapters (II–VI) have aimed to develop and emphasize a conception of modern case work that gives it importance and dignity as an institution in society, where otherwise it might be conceived as mere ambulance-work—"helping people out of difficulties." Case work devises help in ways that shape cooperative controls in people's continuing experience, and leaves their group-conditioned standards and practices the better for the help. This conception of social agencies in the community as stabilizing and advancing *social values* is one that puts the worker in the rôle of working *through* the case situation *for* the common good. She is really an educational worker in an experience curriculum, and she requires, as we have been learning, a special educational imagination by which she sees what persons, arrangements, and influences to mobilize, so that when she withdraws, her "client group" will keep the achieved betterments going and growing.

It will be well now to look at an actual case in order to recognize in it the things that make it meaningful as a life situation which follows a course to a point where the agency can withdraw its guidance with a sense of this educational fulfilment. We shall note especially the considerations that determine the "scope" of the situation—its outreach among persons and conditioning influences—and the "span" of its

course as an adjustive process. These things set questions as to the scope of the participating agency's responsibility. The agency here is a Child Guidance Clinic, and the situation is reported as "The Case of Herbert."¹ We shall present it with marginal comments which aim to help a lay reader catch the fuller significance of items which might otherwise fail of their due weight in the account.

The Case of Herbert

Note that the visiting teacher, although not described professionally as a case worker, supplements the school with services somewhat parallel to those with which a medical case worker supplements the hospital.

To the mother the "problem" appears over-simply as boy-centered: "What can we do about Herbert?"

"The visiting teacher in Herbert's school was much concerned about Herbert's case. She had known the family well through Herbert's older sister having been hurt in an accident on the way to school a year earlier. Since then, Herbert's mother had always gone to the visiting teacher with her problems, confident that she would get help. This time no one seemed to be able to solve her problem. Thirteen-year-old Herbert was failing in school. Everyone said he was a good boy. His mother said he was a wonderful one. The school psychologist tested Herbert and found that he was of superior intelligence, but Herbert's teacher had said there was little chance that Herbert would pass into the eighth grade at the next promotion because he was failing in three of the major subjects. Earlier

¹ From *Understanding the Child* (January, 1932), a publication of the Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene. This article is here reprinted with the kind permission of the editor, and of the author, Dr. Samuel W. Hartwell.

he had done very well in his school work.

"What the Visiting Teacher Knew. The visiting teacher knew a great many things about the case. Herbert's mother had but two children, an older sister and himself. She was very fond of her children and spent a great deal of time working for them in various ways. She was very proud of them, too, saying that they were to make their mark in the world. She was ashamed of her husband because he was not a college graduate and did not like to belong to literary societies. Even though she loved him, she frankly told the teacher that she did not like to appear in public with the father because he was always a 'wall flower.'

"The visiting teacher also knew that if Herbert made a failure of school work, even if he were kept back only this one time, serious things might happen in the mother's emotional life. The mother was actually thinking of taking the boy away from home with her for a year, in order to coach him herself until he came to his senses.

"What Herbert Thought about It. Herbert knew that he was trying to get his lessons. He thought that he wanted to pass. He would become discouraged, both in school and out, and cry about it. Until a few months previous, Herbert had never cried about anything. The boys had always

Note that in her "set" a college degree and a membership in the literary society are symbols of status, conferring "social" values over and above the personal enrichment they may represent.

An impulsive step which would only aggravate the tensions between herself and her husband; it would substitute a mode of escape from the problem for a real solution.

Note that the boy's "set" has its own symbols of status, and that the field of his unadjustment widens to include the playground.

Misinterpretation by the mother of her own (cultural-marital) tensions aggravates the emotional strains in the boy.

A tentative definition of the problem from the psychiatric point of view.

accepted him as a leader, but now they were calling him 'baby' and this was making him very unhappy.

"Herbert thought that it was his father's fault that he was failing in school. He believed this because his mother had told him so, but he did not tell this to his teacher or others, because he loved his father and did not want to make him feel badly; and besides, and more important than this, his mother had told him it would be a disgrace for others to know that his father was so dull that his son could not learn well in school. Herbert did not know just what would happen if he failed in school, but he thought it would be something very bad, and he tried very hard not to think about that; but somehow these thoughts would come when he was trying his hardest to study his lessons, and away his mind would go, and his work would not be finished in time for class.

"What the Social Worker Thought. The visiting teacher talked her problem over with the social worker in the Child Guidance Clinic, who agreed that the problem was serious. She told the teacher that she believed Herbert's behavior was probably based on mental conflicts of some kind; that in her opinion Herbert was trying as hard as he could to get his lessons, and that he really did not know why he could not, a thing that he kept insisting was true.

What is here sought is (1) a corroboration of data already obtained, and (2) new situational data of a more subjective and intimate sort.

The doctor's part in this situation is (1) to elicit items the operative significance of which he is trained to recognize, and (2) to establish a special *relationship* which he is peculiarly able to *develop* for the boy's good.

The "circuit" of the present situation has a time span reaching not only forward for its needed adjustments, but backward into the generating circumstances of its problem.

She advised the visiting teacher to bring Herbert to the Clinic for two reasons: first, to have more extensive psychological tests given to make sure that there were no intellectual disabilities accounting for his school failures; and second, to give Herbert a chance to talk things over with the doctor.

"This was done. The tests given by the Clinic psychologist agreed in every way with those given by the school department. The psychologist pointed out that during the examination certain things were noticed that indicated unconscious motivations; and a very definite lack of 'affect' on the lad's part to the whole situation also made her feel that the boy was probably unaware of many of his deeper emotions.

"What Herbert and the Psychiatrist Talked About. At first they talked about things that would help them get acquainted, and the boy gradually came to find that it made him a little happier, a little less discouraged, when the doctor knew very thoroughly the way he felt about things. They talked about Herbert's early life and Herbert remembered how happy he used to be when he and his father were together. Then Herbert told about a period when he was very unhappy because his father and mother disagreed about what school he should attend, about the best way for him to study his lessons, and

Incompatible cultural ideals of the parents are thus the source of inner conflicts for the boy.

Note the boy's "dream solution" for the family problem.

Developments in the situation during the "treatment" process may both accentuate the problem and clarify it.

what he should be when he became a man, even though at that time he was only nine years old. Herbert said that he was used to these disagreements now and they did not make him feel badly any more, except sometimes when his father wanted him to do something to which his mother objected because she thought only common boys did such things. Herbert had thought the things all out, he said, and his mother had explained them to him, and he had decided that the trouble was that his father, not being educated, did not realize so well what was best for him. So he always did as his mother said. During the serious moments of the conversation, however, Herbert would say things that showed the doctor very definitely how guilty he felt at times because he was making his father unhappy, and he told the doctor that when he was a man he planned to be good to his father. One of his boyish dreams was that somehow he would earn enough money so that his father could go to college and get a college education. Herbert was envious of the boys whose fathers were well educated, even though they were not so successful in business as was his father.

"During the time of the intimate acquaintance with the doctor, a very interesting incident occurred. Herbert's father had two tickets to a football game which he planned to

The beginning of insight at a deeper level for the boy?

A boy-centered statement of the problem from the special expert's point of

Note that the term "total situation" shows the doctor's awareness of the wider scope of the case, although he may not be using it with the special implications of "situation-centered" thinking.

attend with his boy. He did not know that this conflicted with an appointment Herbert had to attend an art class. Herbert was very unhappy the day before the game when he came to see the doctor. He said it was because he did not want to miss the football game, but when the doctor asked him if he was sure that was the reason, he burst out crying (the only time during their acquaintance) and said that it was not that, but it was because he wanted to be with his father. The doctor offered to call his mother, explain the situation to her, and suggest that Herbert go to the game. The boy refused to let him, however, and said his mother knew best and that he should not miss the art class.

"What the Psychiatrist's Explanation Was. The psychiatrist believed that Herbert was in conflict about whether he wanted to identify himself with his father, as most normal boys do, or whether he wished to remain his mother's little boy, always. The psychiatrist believed that while the boy loved both parents, he was coming to the time when he must in some way express both these loyalties, and because of the total situation he was unable to express himself openly either to himself or to others.

"Most of the parents' quarrels had been about the father's lack of education. The boy had become unhappy and in conflict about this, and found it difficult to concentrate on his stud-

ies. Long ago he had found a pleasant and easy way to express unconsciously his loyalty to his father. It was to behave as his father had done as a boy (according to the mother's statements), and to be 'dumb' in school. Therefore, the psychiatrist felt, as school went along and failures came, instead of feeling wholeheartedly sorry about the failures, Herbert felt only partially sorry, and in his unconscious there were many reasons that made the failures a desirable thing. Chief of these was that in this way he appeased his feelings of guilt about being disloyal to the father.

"There were many corollaries to this thought, and the psychiatrist believed that its solution, based on this theoretical explanation, would be difficult. He did not believe that he should go deeply into the conflicts with the boy and attempt to explain them to him until after certain adjustments were made in his environment and especially in the attitudes of his parents toward him.

"What All These People Planned to Do. The visiting teacher, the psychologist from the school and the one from the Clinic, the social worker, and the psychiatrist talked the matter over. It was decided that if the psychiatrist's ideas were valid, the plan for the solution must include explaining the matter frankly to the mother, and to the father, too, and trying to change the way they felt

The community resources for specialized services here make it possible to have five technicians in on the case.

The *pooling* of suggestions toward the solution here is a characteristic of "situational thinking."

about life and the boy. It was hoped that, because both parents realized the boy's unhappiness and his failures, they would be willing to try to make the necessary changes, at least in their behavior, and if possible in their emotional life.

"The question then arose as to who was to carry out the treatment, and it was decided that the most difficult task, that of explaining to the mother in a way that she could accept and understand best, should be done by the visiting teacher, because she already had the mother's confidence and trust. A part of the plan was for the psychiatrist to see the father and help him understand the situation and help him, for his boy's sake, to do things that would make it easier for the mother, who had by far the most difficult task. The plan included an occasional visit of the boy to the Clinic to keep his acquaintance active with the psychiatrist, so that, if later a more serious facing of the problem by the boy himself were necessary, the doctor could help him do it.

"How It All Came Out. The visiting teacher had some long conferences with the social worker and approached her problem slowly. She encouraged the mother to read books about conflicts in children's minds that sometimes made them unhappy and often made them unable to understand themselves, and then she explained to the mother what the

Mother, father, and boy are included for treatment as a "client group." The field of tensions, of course, involves still others; e. g., the boy's teacher, sister, playmates.

Humor, as a mode of response, is intellectual, and marks the reducing of emotional strains.

psychiatrist thought the 'mechanism' was in Herbert's case. This took several weeks, but when the mother understood, she accepted her share of the blame and tried her best to help solve the lad's problem. She did this for her boy's sake at first. Later she came to the point where she could laugh at herself just a little. And then the visiting teacher knew that she had commenced to understand, and she saw that this was the reason why the mother was no longer so unhappy about the boy's school failures, which indeed were becoming much less frequent. Then she knew that the battle had really been won.

"It did not become necessary for the doctor to go deeply into this boy's conflicts with him. He felt there was some danger of disturbing and confusing him if this should be done. When the cause of the conflicts was removed, the boy's school work improved, and what was more important, he became a much happier and much better adjusted boy, both to his parents and to his schoolmates. He found that he was getting pleasure and satisfaction both from the success in being 'a regular guy' in the eyes of the other boys and of his father, and in his improved school work. He was being what each of his parents wanted him to be, and in so doing, he was not finding it necessary to feel that one or the other parent was made unhappy or felt jealous of

Note that the adjustment that has been reached is one not simply in terms of restored success at school. It is an adjustment of personal relations for the whole "client group."

the other because of any particular success. Success now brought him pleasure instead of half pleasure and half pain as before, and this was all he needed.

"It has been more than a year now since the original conference about the case was held in the Child Guidance Clinic. The boy is on the honor roll in school, as he should be because of his superior intelligence. The mother is proud of the father because she understands him better, and the father can admit to himself that he is proud of the mother because of her fine education. The older sister is happier, too, of course, because the disagreements and uncertainties in the home have disappeared."

DEMANDS OF THE PROBLEM ON "CASE THINKING"

If we inspect this record of "the case of Herbert" we shall recognize the things which have been discussed as entering into good "case thinking." We see at once that the "need situation" appears in the relationships of a "client group," and that its unadjustments arise from conflicts of attitude involving "certain social values which depend for their fulfilments upon cooperative developments between the implicated persons and circumstances" (p. 96). The *values* here may be listed, with notes as to the *attitudes*:

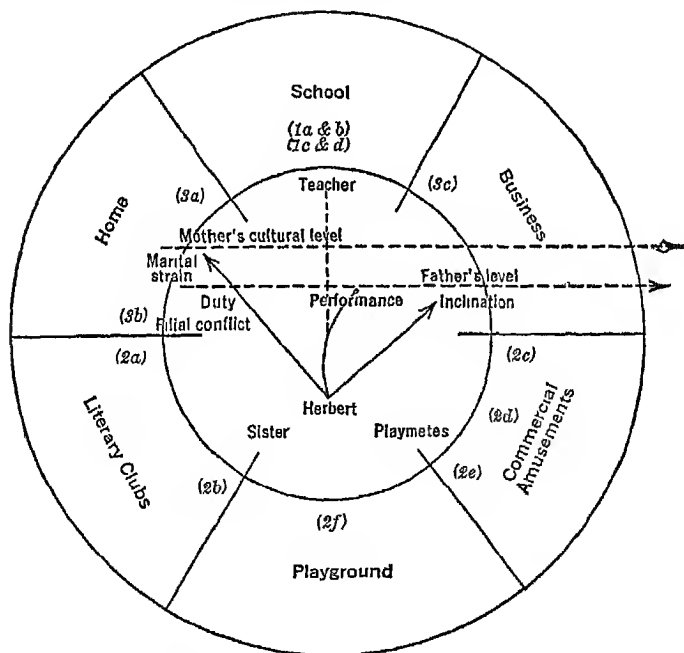
(1) *Education*

- (a) Mother's attitude: academic attainments made a basis of social standing; she hence feels humiliation at the father's non-qualified status.

- (b) Father's attitude: distaste for figuring in a "wall-flower" rôle at gatherings of the college bred.
 - (c) Boy's attitude: school attainment made a duty toward his mother, but felt as divisive between the boy and his father—*two* conflicting attitudes.
 - (d) All three view success in school as a basis for family pride, and failure as mortifying.
- (2) *Recreation*
- In literary club activities
 - (a) Mother's attitude: group expression of intellectual interests made a social code for the college bred.
 - (b) Father's attitude: felt disqualification for participating.
 - In commercial amusements
 - (c) Mother's attitude: some of these felt as "common."
 - (d) Father's attitude: acceptance of amusements by somewhat crude standards of the "tired business man."
 - (e) Boy's attitude: good taste in his pleasures accepted as a loyalty to his mother, but felt as divisive between himself and his father. (Cf. 1c).
 - In playground activities
 - (f) Playmates' attitudes: exhibition of self-control and other vigorous traits made the marks of a "regular guy."
- (3) *Home relations*
- (a) Attitudes of strain owing to the different cultural levels of the marital partners.
 - (b) Emotional conflict in the children owing to divided attachments where mother and father represent conflicting standards.
 - (c) Father's business success affords self-satisfied attitudes of a "good provider."

We can note further that this cluster of factors thus arising in the attitudes and circumstances of the group here

under view forms a situational pattern that gains intelligibility as we see it configured against the background of community institutions. The personal relations of Herbert and his group are projected against *social* influences defined by the prevailing mores in home, school, business, and recreation groups. The resulting "configuration" can be suggested by the following diagram, in which the attitudes which we have listed are indicated (by their letter-symbols) as the forces of tension in a patterned field:



In discussing the case situation as a "unit of attention" for "case thinking" we have already observed (pp. 80-85) that its content and scope are determined by a socially de-

veloping purpose, with which the client group moves together through a circuit of adjustive change and social growth. We have remarked also that the whole situation divides as it moves into "sub-situations" offering the "handles" by which a participating agency can most helpfully take hold. In the case we have just recounted the "social purpose" which determines its scope as a field of concern is plainly that of developing between the members of this family the personal-social insights and attitude changes that will organize their continuing relationships upon a maturer level. But the phase of all this which more immediately presented itself was the sub-situation around Herbert's failure in school. Its outreach and time-span, as seen by the Child Guidance Clinic and the visiting teacher, was defined by the purpose of bringing Herbert back to a level of conduct and scholarship from which he had fallen away. Conceived thus, its defining aspects were the boy's changed behavior, his showing from psychological tests, his conflicting loyalties between his two parents, the mother's conflict of attitudes toward her husband (whom she loved, yet of whom she was ashamed) and toward her son, for whom she had ambition that he should outstrip his father. The more immediate treatment-concern could disregard the boy's sister, playmates, and teacher, and could even leave the father somewhat in the background.

We may note here that the somewhat "client-centered" definition and treatment that appear in the agency's account of its participation are due in part to the specialized nature of its service. The Child Guidance Clinic (and also the visiting teacher) had a special institutional interest in the boy. The psychiatrist is trained to give such a boy a distinctive kind of help, by establishing a relationship through

which the boy wins self-knowledge and bettered feelings about his difficulties.² This is skilled, perceptive treatment of a client individual. As we have seen, the clinical help to the boy is supplemented by helpful interviews between the visiting teacher and the social worker with the mother. Thus the agencies here concerned, although they dealt with three persons, evidently felt themselves responsible, not so much for a continuing situation, as for a present problem-child.

² In a review of Dr. Samuel Hartwell's *Fifty-five "Bad" Boys* (Knopf, 1931) Dr. E. Stanley Abbott summarizes the basic ideas of this remedial relationship. "Dr. Hartwell," he says, "sought to win from the boys such confidence and belief in him as would enable them to see for themselves or accept from him ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that were better and more adequate than those they had been using, and to *feel* that they were better. He describes the amount of confidence or intimacy which he tries to establish with them as falling somewhat arbitrarily into four successive degrees of rapport. The first, the most superficial and least effective, is that of *friendly belief*, about equivalent to that established between an average normal child and a teacher whom the child respects and believes to be interested in his welfare.

"The second degree is that of *personal trust*. It may be compared with that existing between an adolescent and an older person whom the child admires for his wisdom and by whom he wishes to be appreciated.

"The third and most helpful is that of *personality contact*, in which the child not only believes in the physician and trusts him, but positively wants the physician to understand and like him. 'I believe that all unhappy children are either consciously or unconsciously desiring this *personality contact* with someone.'

"The deepest degree is that of *dependent attachment*, in which the child craves the physician's appreciation and liking and depends upon him. He is then very suggestible. This is not without its dangers, especially when it becomes necessary to break off the relations between them.

"Dr. Hartwell analyzes what he himself does into *thinking about* the child, *thinking for* him, and *thinking with* him. The first includes learning about the boy and his situation from many sources, including the boy himself. *Thinking for* him includes weighing the importance of the data so learned, and planning what the boy needs most, how best to secure it for him, and what degree of rapport will be most helpful. *Thinking with* him means trying to establish the desired degree of friendly intimacy or rapport, through getting the boy to talk freely about his real thought, his feelings, his desires, and his ways, while the physician withholds all condemnation, and tries, with complete frankness, to help the boy understand himself and see better attitudes and ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving." (From *Understanding the Child*, Jan., 1932.)

As viewed from the more inclusive concern of social work the case here would take in not only the difficulties of the boy but the whole cluster of filial and marital relations as involved in the family's part in current community standards. With this broader purpose, the unit of thinking and treatment would enlarge its scope and content by bringing the man's and the daughter's attitudes into the foreground along with the conflicting emotions and aims of the woman and the son. The daughter, older than the boy, must have become aware of the divergence in ideals between her father and mother, and must have been influenced by it in her own standards, and in her attitude toward her father, even though her behavior did not reveal this in any disturbing way. The present situation, although still at the level of remediable mistakes, yet suggests dangers in the years ahead from a possible accumulating of grievances and incompatibilities within the family circle—dangers frequently overlooked, because undramatic. It has a longer time-dimension than the need dealt with by the Clinic.

In order to perceive the social meaning of this, as of any situation, one must view it in its cultural background. Herbert's inner conflict sprang out of the conflicting ideals of his parents. The ideals of conduct or of success held by any father and mother are conditioned and sustained (if not created) first by their nearest kin, their respective clans (whose "folk-ways" count in memory despite separation), and second by social and economic groups outside the family. One would like to know something of the early home influences of Herbert's parents, whether those two people were or were not wanting to rise above their social heritage. This would depend upon their present cultural setting and

the standards by which they measured this heritage.

That the mother's feelings had their source in what she took to be group opinion—in status—is suggested by her saying that it would be "a disgrace for others to know" of the father's "dullness," that "only common boys did such things" as the father proposed, that she did not like to appear "in public" with him, and that she was "ashamed" because he could not enjoy literary societies. Such an attitude presupposes a social milieu beyond that of the immediate family, and objects of desire created within wider group relationships. Yet these objects of desire—these ideals of successful living, the achievements or the characteristics of which people are "proud"—often betoken a public opinion uncritically formed. They need a constant reevaluating lest certain status symbols assume an undue importance in relation to others. For instance, the apathy of Herbert's father toward literary clubs raises a question as to how real were the intellectual interests of these groups. If their purpose was serious, they would make little of a business man's unfamiliarity with subjects quite outside his own field, whether or not he was college-bred. He could with self-respect attend as a listener without being expected to become a member. If, on the other hand, they merely *savored* literature by way of social diversion, then the non-college man, unable to share the *pleasures* of the better-educated, would be a "wall-flower." The shame felt by Herbert's mother may have expressed a frustrated status desire within groups whose literary interests were, after all, rather "light-weight," so that her concern was for the social more than the intellectual handicap of a man otherwise successful in his own calling. If so, this woman was doing no more than

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to reflect unthinkingly a confusion of values that is common throughout our society—our total "behavioral environment."³

The father, too, taking his pleasures at foot-ball games, and desiring his boy to be a "regular guy," was reflecting a widely held social ideal. Both he and his wife needed to face the limitations as well as the merits of the group-endorsement back of their respective interests and ideals, with a purpose of deliberately building up aims and standards they could share. Self-knowledge on the mother's part and an emotional adjustment between the parents and their son, such as the Clinic brought about, was indeed the necessary starting-point. But for the critical period ahead, during which the young people will be especially sensitive to group approvals, the parents jointly with the daughter and son must move toward sounder conceptions of the things to be valued and aimed-for in life.

Leadership in this outreach of psycho-social thought is the special task of the social worker. In the present instance she would help these four people to examine their differences of view as to what forms of success they will place first, what second, and why; and as to what friends or groups will reinforce the more, and what the less valid symbols of status. For this husband to continue "proud" of his wife's education he must see her appear well among others without its humiliating him; for her to take pride in him,

³ Dr. Walter Beck, in a discussion of "Culture and Neurosis," remarks that in America "we do not have a well-defined, well-integrated cultural structure . . . in which to find a place and function, and from which to derive personal and trans-personal significance, and meaningfulness for our activity. . . . We *want* to do something and to be somebody socially significant, and it is, today, not determined enough who we are and what we are within the cultural system." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 232.

she must see him among people who bring out his strong points. In other words, their pride must be sustained by an affirming chorus of people—of a "public"—whose standards, like their own, have been thought through. The case worker, therefore, recognizes her need-situation as "solved" when the client group, through its own "situational thinking" (with her stimulus and suggestion), achieves (1) a shared insight into the determinants of a stable social growth for all the persons concerned, and (2) sufficient shared control of these determinants to assure the group a continued advance "under its own power."

EXERCISES

1. For a study of the cultural background which influences family attitudes such as figure in "The Case of Herbert" read the following passages in *Middletown*, by Robert and Helen Lynd:

Chapter X. Marriage, esp. pp. 118-119;

" XVI. School "Life," esp. pp. 218-222;

" XIX. The Organization of Leisure, esp. pp. 276 f;
285-306; 309-312.

What do these passages suggest as *social* ideas (in addition to mental hygiene ideas) that are needed for full insight into family situations?

2. Read a case history and make out for its special problem a "situation analysis" such as is given on pp. 201-203 for "The Case of Herbert" including—
 - (a) A summary statement of the problem;
 - (b) The attitudes of persons in the situation toward the values that are at stake;
 - (c) The pattern of personal-social relations involved.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW DOES THE WORKER DEAL WITH HER COMMUNITY RESOURCES?

From the summarized case records in this book it is evident that the social worker in an urban community has available in varying degrees a wide array of organized agencies ready to cooperate in one another's problems. Communities of any size are likely to have some, and the larger cities all of the service organizations of the following types:

For community work:

Neighborhood Houses

Societies dealing with immigrants

For youth groups:

Boys' and girls' Scout Troops

Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., etc.

Vocational Guidance

Agencies for recreation

For health service:

Dispensaries

Hospitals

Medical Social Service

Visiting Nurse Association

For mental hygiene:

Mental Hospitals, with Psychiatric Social Service

Habit Clinics

For relief and family welfare service:

Family Welfare Association

- Catholic and Jewish Charities
- Travelers' Aid Society
- Legal Aid Society
- For child helping:
 - Agencies placing out children
 - Children's Homes
 - (Public) Division of Child Guardianship
 - Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- For correctional work:
 - Probation Officers
 - Correctional Schools
- For care of the aged and handicapped:
 - Homes for the Aged
 - Almshouse
 - Agencies for the Blind
 - Agencies for the Crippled

All these agencies represent, as was remarked on page 59, the permanent organized concern of many people to maintain and advance the standards of "good life" for the community. Through the pooled resources and efforts of donors, directors, and staff workers they each give a stable embodiment to a social purpose which otherwise could be but meagrely realized. They not only organize services for the disadvantaged. They stimulate the thinking and sensitize the feelings of people in defining the social interests and purposes that shall be wrought into our social structure and become everybody's assumptions as to what the community should do. Among these people of more awakened social concern should of course be reckoned the case worker. It is a part of her special competency in her service to need-situations to know the resources about her, and to appreciate them, both for their help on her problems and for their claim on her opportunities to reinforce their distinctive rôles.

This demand on the worker for competent community thinking takes three forms. It appears first as our expectation of real insight on her part into the nature of the diversities among the various community agencies. It appears in our assumption that she has a working knowledge of the community resources for help to her clients. And it will appear in her colleagues' concern that she use her relationships to cooperating agencies in ways that express a responsibility for the integrity of their respective purposes and functions. We shall here discuss these three requirements of community thinking in their order.

THE NATURE OF THE AGENCY DIVERSITIES

When we look at the many agencies of a modern city we are struck by the fact that their number is not explainable in terms of the number of *kinds of social work* to be done. We can see why there should be two agencies for helping children when one of them offers supervised foster-home care and the other conducts a habit clinic. But we can see less readily why there should be three children's agencies when all three of them offer supervised foster-home care, and they seemingly differ only in the fact that one of them is financed by gifts and bequests for its purpose, the second by public taxation, and the third is supported as one of the "charities" of a religious organization. If we are to begin our "community thinking" by inspecting the agencies about us (contributory to case work) with a view to appreciating their significant diversities, we shall help our own thinking if we first list such *features* of organized philanthropies as inevitably give rise to differences in their functions, poli-

cies, and grades of performance. These features we can tabulate as follows:

DETERMINANTS OF AGENCY DIFFERENTIATION

Type of service

General case work

Specialized with respect to—

Needs requiring distinctive equipment and skills; e. g.—

Physical ills or handicaps, mental ills or retardations

Special requirements of babies, children, adolescents
(sex differentiations), and old people

Time demand of the case

Requirement of pressure

Source of support

Endowment funds

Voluntary contributions

From donors at large—on appeal of the service

From donors of a special group—on appeal also of
organizational (or other) sentiment or claim

Taxation

Fees paid by clients for services

Selective concern for class of persons to be served

Economic and social level

Special identification or affiliation with Church, lodge,
racial group, etc.

Promisingness as “human material”

Instructiveness of the experience material

Certain of these determinants of agency difference are obvious and need no discussion. The features of service and of selection for service that distinguish a Family Welfare Association, say, from a Hospital Social Service and a City Almshouse go without saying. Others of these features

are such as carry consequences beyond what would be thought of upon their mere mention. These we shall take up in their order as tabulated above.

I. *Consequences for an Agency of Case Features
Affecting Its Type of Service*

Two features of case situations deserve special attention as requiring an agency to make decisions which in effect make a difference in the kind of agency it will continue to be. These are the time demands of the needs that it deals with, and the place of "pressure" as a possible requisite in its services.

Time Demands of Its Cases. Since a long-continuing need means many days and much money devoted to a single case, an agency which allows its intake to be so managed that cases of such need accumulate and absorb its resources is thereby presumably restricting the number of new, incoming situations as composing its service program. Whatever determines, therefore, the proportion between its comparatively temporary and comparatively "chronic" cases will be one factor in determining its *function*—as regards a prevailing *type of situation* in which it aims to give assistance.

In cases of economic need—for food, shelter, child care—this factor is a differentiating feature in the functions of public welfare departments as contrasted with those of privately supported family and children's agencies. Where governmental and private organizations exist side by side, the latter may prefer cases which look to be "temporary" (that is, tractable to adjustment in months rather than years, or in one or two years rather than ten) on the ground

that continuing cases are a more appropriate charge on the public purse.¹

In cases where occupational retraining must be given to men or women who have become handicapped by accident or disease the time demand of this retraining must be considered by the agency, as well as the clients' potential attainments in the new vocations. For in the measure that it accepts clients who learn with extreme slowness the agency changes its educational or therapeutic function into one of affording "sunshine work," or—if pay is given—disguised relief.

Its Use of Pressure. In Chapter V we observed the case worker in special interview relations in which the client's state of mind made necessary the exercise of suasion or even of pressure. We must now note that certain common need-situations are such that only an organization empowered to use pressure can properly deal with them. Thus whereas a need for health guidance in a family with a cardiac problem can often be met by a medico-social department with methods of suggestion and advice, a situation involving pollution of water supply, unsafe housing conditions, or contagious disease requires a city health department that can give orders. We cannot dally with delicacies of relationship to the client—out of "respect for his personality"—while he is engaged in making other people's health or life unsafe. The *orders* he gets represent a *collec-*

¹ "The public agency should bear from the tax fund the heaviest part of the relief burden. To this end it may, in general, well take those cases in which the capacity for self-support does not exist in any considerable measure in the client himself and will not *for a long time*. This would include cases of old age, widows with young children, tuberculosis and other *long continued* disabilities."—From a Report of the Committee on Relations with Public Departments of the American Association for Organizing Social Work, 1925. (Italics not in the original.)

tive pressure—a potential coercion that may become actual by resort to the police and the court.

Very mild forms of pressure characterize the service of private training institutions, such as Children's Homes under lay or church auspices, which place out and supervise young people after an educational period. Here there are bound to be a routine of activity and rules by which all must abide. What the institution affords is an artificially circumscribed cultural situation, one from which conflicting group standards have been largely eliminated, and in which the *alternatives for choice are enchanneled*. Certain of the requirements for personal and social living, such as regular habits and good manners, can apparently be learned readily under a regimented order. For instance, the head of a small training school for girls once declared that an important part of her work consists in teaching girls how to thresh out their differences without hair-pulling. It may be that we shall gain valuable educational knowledge as to what lessons are better inculcated by the enchanneled group experience of an institution—say, a boarding-school or camp—than by the freer personal give-and-take in a child's own home or in a foster home.

Pressure is manifestly a function of the court, which may in its discretion allow probational supervision in the offender's own home, in a foster home, or in a private institution, or may sentence to a public institution for delinquents. Here the pressure may of course, under certain explicit conditions, be held in abeyance, but the probation department as the supervising agency weights the behavior choices of its juvenile clients toward community-sanctioned standards. Even more evident is the directing of conduct on the part of the public industrial school or reformatory.

2. *Consequences for Agency Practice Arising from
Distinctive Sources of Support*

Important differences between agencies—differences of function, of policy, and of standards of work—may result from differences in the freedom with which their administrators can exercise selection to control the kinds of case and amount of case load they will carry, and can initiate experimental advances in method. And, since those who administer an agency's program must justify its policies of selection and developments in method to those who give the agency its support, we find administrative freedom depending in its turn on the level of social intelligence, imagination and courage at the points of control in financing. We must therefore look at the more important differences in the sources of money support as they influence the general tenor of agency practice. Four sources of support deserve special attention: taxation, voluntary contributions, income from endowments and bequests, and fees paid by clients for services.

Public Taxation. Administrators of a public welfare department, knowing themselves answerable to the citizenry of a whole city or state, have to reckon with the standards and expectations, as regards social work, of "the man on the street." First among this man's assumptions is a feeling that public aid should be given to all comers on the sole basis of need. The public agency, therefore, is likely to carry a heavy case load, and cannot easily maintain time-consuming standards in its service. The average man's second assumption is that all clients should be treated alike—which means that the public agency can safely introduce differentiations in treatment only on grounds that the popular

mind can be brought to accept. Furthermore, public welfare departments are peculiarly liable to unfair criticism. Operating under governmental auspices they are within political zones of influence. Their mistakes in judgment and (actual or alleged) omissions in service are likely to be seized on by demagogues anxious to advance their own political fortunes. Moreover, while competent work does not easily make an arresting newspaper story, any misjudgment or mishap that can be presented in the guise of a scandal is colorful copy. A public department, therefore, tends to change its ways slowly and with caution. A forceful state or city official and his staff, *can*, indeed, bring about as radical changes as occur in good privately financed agencies; yet in public work these make heavier demands on energies, patience, and tact than would the same changes in the more enlightened private societies. More people must be convinced, more time given to explaining and reexplaining a proposed step, conflicting interests must be reconciled, purposes may have to be sustained over years. Even though an advance, when achieved, benefits far more citizens than does a corresponding step in a private agency, the public administrator often feels that his efforts to advance are not appreciated. It becomes easier to proceed by routine, according to the letter of the law, so that if complaints arise or a public investigation is on, any censure will fall on faulty statutes and not on him.

All this is not to say that welfare departments do not exist, perhaps in increasing numbers, which maintain a highly creditable level of service and share in the advances won by good social thinking. It is to say simply that tax support, by giving all citizens, however slight their claims as social thinkers, a felt right to dictate public agency policies, *tends*

to restrict public departments to the relieving of gross and obvious distress at the level of material needs, and to limit their freedom in taking progressive steps which their own best thinking might suggest.

Voluntary Contributions. The private agency, supported by donors at large who make their contributions because of their confidence in its management or their appreciation of its functions, quite naturally has a freer play for trying out new methods in meeting need-situations, for demonstrating new fields of need, and for setting and maintaining forward-looking standards. Where fewer people put up the money, and where these people are predominantly from the more educated social groups, flexibility of method is more readily understood, and proposals for change may win a readier backing. It is true that when, as sometimes happens, the donors are mainly persons of narrow social outlook, the administration of such an agency may be far from progressive.² In any agency the social intelligence of the larger donors depends in part on the way in which social work is interpreted to them by the members of its voluntary board, and if these members keep their own minds preoccupied with aspects of the work that require no social imagination, they will raise money on the basis of implied commitments which make the agency less attractive to really high-grade executives and case workers. Yet it is distinctive of agencies which seek private support that their financing processes involve a continuous educational function in the relationships between executives, board mem-

² It is always to be remembered that voluntary financing, in itself, merely affords *opportunity* for initiative. Actually many a private agency maintains standards less high than those of the better-run public departments. While fraudulent charities are undoubtedly the exception, half-effective ones are numerous.

bers, and donors, so that the raising of their funds for operation is attended by an increasing spread of philanthropic intelligence in the community.

In the case of social agencies whose support comes from religious or fraternal organizations the sponsoring and supporting organization has, of course, its own institutional interests and aims, which naturally make themselves felt in the shaping of agency functions and policies. The agency, indeed, may be said to serve an institutional objective as a part of its own special function. The interests of its sponsoring group, religious or other, may be felt as enriching its own objectives and services; they may seem merely not incompatible with the distinctive aims of social work; or they may, at times, seem conflicting with policies which social work develops when it is professionally "on its own." For example, the executive of a children's agency under diocesan sponsorship found herself in disagreement with some of the clergy over her professional judgment that certain children should be referred for care to a public department. To the clergyman the claim of the Church to "care for its own" seemed to dictate what, viewed "professionally" as case work, was an inappropriate preferential treatment for the sort of case in question.

Endowment Funds. An agency whose services are partly or wholly supported by the income of invested funds has a proportionate freedom in developing its policies untrammelled by the requirement of keeping them acceptable to imperfectly comprehending taxpayers or contributors. Such funds may bear any of three sorts of relation to welfare effort: First, they may represent a backlog of security and independence for an organization that also appeals for voluntary subscriptions. Outstanding examples of this are

to be found among children's agencies, the helplessness and promise of whose charges guarantee a maximum of usefulness from a bequest. Within their testamentary restrictions, these endowments tend to increase an agency's opportunity for initiative. Second, invested funds may provide the whole income for some purpose designated by the original donor. The sum of money involved may be large or modest; it may be a family gift, administered partly by those from whom it comes; it may be held and distributed by representatives of some fraternal order, or, as in a number of instances, by the public authorities. The bequest establishing it may date well back or may be fairly recent; and it may be designed for helping widows, the aged, children, the needy of a designated neighborhood,³ for persons "reduced by acts of Providence, not by indolence, extravagance or other vice," for the "pious poor," for "furnishing festive meals on holidays." Altogether, these funds add considerably to the resources available for use in case work.

An endowment bears a third sort of relation to welfare effort where its purposes are stated in more general terms than the preceding, and where the fund is conceived as a reservoir of income on which other agencies, more specific in their aims, may draw for pioneering projects in the social field. This form of financing is especially appropriate for agencies that wish to venture on new lines of effort, or on fresh methods, or on exploring new and less obvious aspects of need. Certain foundations and community trusts have made it a part of their distinctive service to underwrite even new agencies with the function of demonstrating to

³ Of course it may happen that "dead hand" restrictions on the applicability of funds may impair the freedom of initiative which otherwise they would make possible.

the community the value of new developments in service—as in child guidance, mental hygiene, etc.⁴

Fees from Clients for Services. Some of the services in social work (e. g., medical, psychiatric, old age care) are of the sort for which there are many clients with partial ability to pay. Indeed, medical agencies, and some others, can be divided according to their practices in the matter of charges into three classes; viz.—

- (a) Private institutions run for profit; e. g., certain maternity hospitals, sanatoria, and boarding homes for old people.
- (b) Semi-philanthropic institutions whose land, buildings, equipment, and usually part of whose upkeep and overhead are gift-supported, but whose running expenses are covered by graded charges for services. Examples are privately supported hospitals, old people's homes with initial fee.
- (c) Wholly philanthropic institutions, supported entirely by gifts or taxes, and giving services without charge.

The line of division between the last two is a shifting one, since semi-philanthropic agencies may give considerable free service, while even a tax-supported agency (for example an almshouse) may accept reimbursement from patients or clients. The circumstances under which exceptions occur, together with their frequency, determine the *trend* of an agency's function in this regard. So many beds in a private hospital might become endowed as to make it mainly philanthropic, while an almshouse—or one wing of it—might become a boarding home for aged persons of very small independent income. The Chronic Hospital in History

⁴ See E. C. Lindeman, *Wealth and Culture*, a detailed study of one hundred foundations and trusts. Also Ewan Clague, *Charitable Trusts* (University of Pennsylvania, 1935).

A (p. 7) modified its discharge policy somewhat under public criticism that it did not retain non-paying patients long enough.

An instance of the way in which the beneficiaries' ability to pay may influence function is afforded by the experience of a certain high-grade hospital-clinic for children. The standing of the physicians who gave their services to this institution and the quality of care that it offered, attracted parents who, while far from rich, were obviously able to pay more than the very small charges set by the hospital rules. The hospital authorities proposed to raise these near-charity rates, holding themselves free to lower them for parents who were poor. This proposal raised from outside doctors a protest so strong that it was dropped. These practitioners felt that the new plan would draw patients from their own practice by changing the character of the hospital. Its nominal charges, they reasoned, would no longer appear as *charity* to parents in an economic middle class, and consequently even more good paying-patients would be inclined to go where they could get outstanding specialists for their children at what would still have been an extremely modest cost. In other words, the change, in the eyes of the objectors, would have tended to reduce the *proportion* of needy families served by this hospital, and thereby to modify its function—the social interest it was conserving.

Child-placing organizations regularly ascertain whether self-supporting parents cannot pay something toward the board of a child in a foster home. This money, however, which under average conditions may total as a substantial figure, is in a sense a saving to the agency rather than an income. The society receiving \$2.50 a week from a widowed

father toward board that is costing them \$5.00 a week devotes the cash to place a second child on the same terms. By charging a fee it maintains its function as an agency for *supplementing* the resources for child-care in families of small means.

3. *Consequences for an Agency of Selectiveness as to the Class of Persons Served*

In earlier days public agencies for relief were definitely influenced in their manner of dealing with needy persons by a prevailing view that people became *de-classed* when they had to "come on the town." Public relief thus carried a social stigma. The disfranchisement that accompanied its receipt—a loss of legal status—carried with it an implication that the causes of destitution were mainly personal, and that a man who failed in self-maintenance was presumably not a "sober, honest, and industrious" citizen. Such an assumption was natural in a new country rich in undeveloped resources and abounding in opportunities for self-advancement. Its result was that relief offices were often characterized by attitudes and procedures that humiliated the applicants for aid, and this gave added grounds for a feeling in the community that special forms of aid should be organized for persons who are unmistakably respectable. It accounted for the efforts to place the care of motherhood and of old age under independent boards rather than make them a part of the outdoor relief system.

The same tradition apparently accounts in part for a stigma that clings to an almshouse, or public infirmary, even though it is well run. Another reason, however, is that an institution which can refuse admission to no one who needs its services may have inmates of disreputable life,

whose companionship—where all are thrown together in wards—can in itself impair the status of those who have “seen better days.”

At present any stigma distinction between public and private help in people's own homes is rapidly disappearing. This is probably due in part to a recognition of widespread “causes” of economic need today that are quite beyond the control of the individual, and in part to the fact that standards for public care are tending to approach those of the better-equipped private organizations.

Private agencies also are affected in their practice by “status” differences in the persons before them as possible recipients of service. Their workers are apt to feel that, so far as practicable, clients of good standards should be helped toward continuing in the physical and social surroundings—the grade of neighborhood and dwelling, the sort of associates—to which they are accustomed. Moreover, when standards of living attach to real values, their presence enhances the appealingness of a need-situation. A man or woman of upright character, of personal refinement, of intelligence to participate in efforts at help, is likely, when in misfortune, to awaken in case workers and through them the agency, an extra interest, a readiness to stretch policies in order to meet special needs. And since this is more easily done in private than in tax-supported agencies, it becomes almost a function of the former (not, of course, a *professed* function) to conserve the morale of clients who have social sources of self-esteem to lose.

Clients of this sort are naturally felt to belong among the “promising” cases for which, as has been noted (p. 68 f.), the private agencies have a preferential concern. There is obviously a financial reason for this concern. The supporters

of a private agency are people who have already paid taxes to support the public welfare department. Their contributions to private social work are really a voluntary supertax for this community service, and it is easier to enlist their support for cases that seem socially more appealing than many of those which a public agency must take.

As has been remarked (p. 70), an agency may assume the function of contributing something to the basic lore of social work by selecting cases which have in common certain features that it would be socially instructive to know more about. The agency accumulates, and perhaps organizes, and may even interpret the evidence which appears in this specialized experience, and thus becomes, in a modest way, a laboratory for advances in psycho-social science.

THE WORKER'S COMMAND OF THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

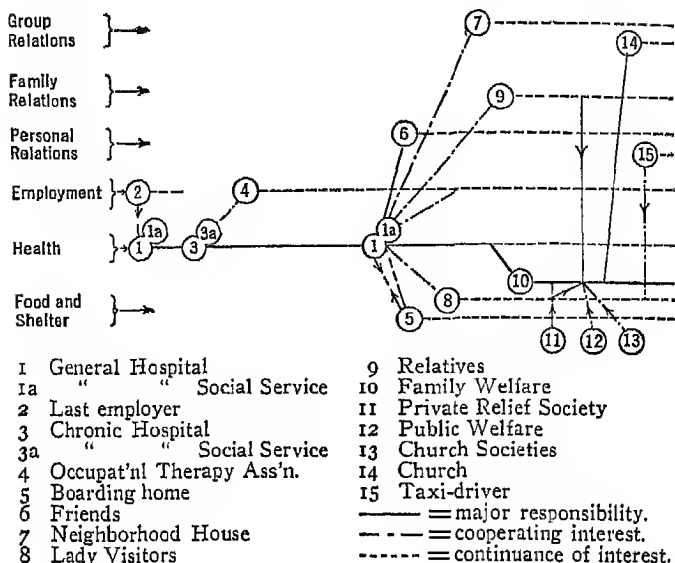
In the preceding section we have seen that a case worker today must be expected to see the significance of the differences among the organized agencies which form her professional setting. We shall now consider how she must display a working command of these and other resources in her whole community setting. As has already been remarked, the "individualizing" and refining of her services are often a matter of good judgment in shaping up the right coordinations between the appropriate agencies and persons to help in the given situation. Lay folk in the community cannot have the working knowledge that will suggest where to turn for the help best addressed to the needs around them, so that the worker is their skilled mobilizer of cooperation from hospitals, dispensaries, district nursing

associations, employment bureaus, agencies for relief, places for recreation or social life, resources for budget instruction, for denominational or race-group assistance, and so on through a long list of possibilities.

1. *The Gains for Social Service from Mutually
Complementary Resources*

The range of organized and personal sources of help which the worker may draw upon was commented upon (p. 13 f.) as they figured in "Case A," involving social provision for a respectable working woman who had become crippled and chronically ill. The resources here successively brought into the situation are displayed in the following chart. Their arrangement in the diagram is meant to represent (a) in their sequence from left to right, the order in which they came into the case, and (b) in their position from bottom to top, the degree of social outreach which each resource effected, beginning at the minimum in the effecting of attentions to bare living (food, shelter, and health), and rising to the maximum in the life-enriching relationships spanned by the Neighborhood House and the Church.

In marshaling these successive resources the workers here were evidently mindful of the differences between them in *long-time dependability* for the help they gave. Least dependable as help were the personal gifts of friends and relatives—unorganized assistance which, however generous, depends for continuance on the state of solvency and interest of one or two persons. Next in order, perhaps, were the Lady Visitors and the Church Guild, informal, loosely-organized groups in which services were *volun-*



teered by the agency members themselves, and a modest budget was supplied by a comparatively small group of persons. More stable in help were the two hospitals with their social service departments, the family welfare society, the private relief and the occupational therapy agency—all organizations whose services were responsibly performed by a paid staff, while their support came from a larger number of voluntary donors and also from endowments; and most stable of all was the tax-supported Public Welfare Department—whose funds for both services and for relief had a coercive backing from the whole citizenry. Of course the workers had to consider not solely dependability but *flexibility* in the collaborating group. The Public Welfare Department could not have allowed \$14 a week to a single person, and the Private Relief Agency, believing this

an appropriate Almshouse case, contributed only for a brief period. It was the Church Guild, Lady Visitors, and a relative of the patient, who made care outside a public infirmary possible. The less stable agents, freer from rulings and precedents, were readier in adapting their help to the special developments. A still further consideration was of course exercised when the workers sought money contributions from relatives (p. 8 f.). Here the source of help was rightly judged if the contributions would not hurt the client's self-respect in relationships involving the sentiments and intimacies of her family group.

Where, as in this case, the locality is well provided with medical and social institutions, case workers have a choice between several general or chronic hospitals, or between several agencies all of which supply after-care for the sick. These alternatives of help tend to make workers sensitive to fresh elements in the need-situations. For example, starting with a need for long convalescence under medical supervision, the General Hospital Social Service sent Miss Horan to a private Chronic Hospital (p. 5) when she was equally eligible for the Almshouse Infirmary or for one of several Homes for the chronic sick. Reasons entering into this choice may have been: (1) that a woman of Miss Horan's character and native refinement might not be happy amid the companionship frequently met in an almshouse—a status consideration; (2) that her physician at the General Hospital, being also on the staff of the Chronic Hospital, could follow her case in the latter institution—a medical consideration; and (3) that the Chronic Hospital had a social service department, whereas the private Homes available did not. This latter consideration meant that the patient would be assured any needed

oversight in the community after her discharge from the hospital—a medico-social consideration. The resources for taking account of so many varying factors meant added appropriateness or individualizing of the client's care.

The worker who is seeking cooperation from appropriate agencies in a situation involving a juvenile behavior-problem may view them as characterized by the kind and degree of regimentation or pressure they employ. According to the gravity of her problem—ranging from that of the merely “difficult” child to that of one persistently or viciously delinquent—she will seek that one of the agencies which will surround the child with just the right simplification of setting and weighting of behavior impulses. As thus scrutinized, the organizations for child welfare sort their institutional influences into four grades of managed circumpressure:

(1) Agencies that give spiritual or social guidance within the home, such as family and children's societies, child guidance clinics, psychiatric social service departments, rely upon methods of appeal or of “therapy,” upon stimulating awareness and encouraging interest in promising directions. Within his own home the child is in a complex cultural setting involving elements of strain—the customs of his special race-group perhaps conflicting with those about him, the behests of orderly society with the heroics of a mischievous gang, the tradition-bound ideas of parents with the freer life of his companions. He must reconcile or make choices between his own impulses and group standards, between one set of group standards and another. His parents and teachers have adjustments to make in their relations with him and with each other. Although the situa-

tion is "normal" in that people's alternatives of behavior may be the same as before the agency entered in on the case, the interest of the agency, impressed through the worker, time and again *weights the scale* in favor of the socially more effective choices. However scrupulously the worker aims to free her clients to think their own way through their difficulties, her very presence as an *institutional* representative tends to stress social, as against impulsively individual, points of view.

(2) Agencies that remove the child from an embroiled home and place it in a foster family thereby stage for the younger person a cultural setting of lessened complexity. He is in an environment especially selected to make better group standards attractive to a child with his peculiar endowment and history. His *alternatives for choice are "framed up,"* so to speak. Since he is away from his own father and mother and since the foster family are paid by or through the agency, the worker exercises a considerably increased guidance over the kinds of experience which the foster child meets. This might be called indirect social pressure.

(3) Private training institutions, such as a Children's Home, afford the "problem child" (as we have already noted) a definitely regulated scheme of life. Here there is an artificial circumscribing and enchanneling of choices so that desired habits and responses get a continuous reinforcement from the framed setting.

(4) Probation departments and "reform schools," of course, use pressure in its most undisguised and coercive forms. The very existence of these correctional agencies in the community doubtless makes them felt in many problem situations where the worker uses nothing but sugges-

tion and mild suasion, but is recognized to have court action as a "last resort."

2. The Importance of Integrative Leadership in the Cooperative Procedures

Any need-situation may of course show economic, health, educational and other aspects at one and the same time. It is therefore evident that a number of organizations may be interested in the same case and become operative in the given situation, and that they must work smoothly together. To assure such a continuous gearing-in, some one of these agencies must take a special responsibility for keeping abreast of the case developments, and for making sure that each agency in the cooperating group is kept aware of such changes as would affect its own interest. All three of our case histories in Chapter I and all of the interviews show one agency carrying a continuous and a correlating responsibility, with others meeting each some special need. Perhaps the type of agency that has been made most aware of the importance of this "integrative" function is the family welfare society. Its workers, concerning themselves always with the well-being of father, mother, and of each and every child, must take cognizance of varied interests that may be in jeopardy. If, as often happens, they carry such an inclusive cognizance over months or years, whereas a hospital, an occupational therapy society, a vocational department, a child-placing or country rest agency between them meet special needs over comparatively short periods, they find themselves almost of necessity correlating these various services by "assuming the major responsibility."

Any of these other agencies, however, may take such a "leading" rôle when the outstanding need in a situation—e. g., health or child care—comes within its special function.

Social workers today should seek a greater clarity of mind as to this "integrative leadership." They often conceive their "cooperating" merely as a dividing of tasks, each agency taking a definite but separate part without anyone becoming responsible for their thinking and working together toward the reshaping of the shared need-situation. For instance, a family welfare worker persuaded a children's society to place for the summer an undernourished little girl, from a family group whom the former were hoping to "get on their feet." A second and a third spring she renewed this request, asking at last for indefinite placement because the child's health always relapsed after a few weeks in her own home. At the close of the third year the family worker "closed" the case ⁵ (because the parents had proved unresponsive to her efforts) without notifying the children's agency. The two organizations, supposedly "cooperating," apparently expected neither that the worker who came to know the child intimately could contribute to an understanding of the home, nor that the worker visiting the home regularly could throw light on the child's continuing development. Such an assumption and method appear again in Interview J (p. 176) where the worker asked the police to make an arrest without adequately taking them into her counsels. Like the family vis-

⁵ I. e., dropped it from active care. Regular visits would not be made on a "closed" case, and assistance would be given only on the initiative of the family themselves or of some specially interested outsider.

itor she also used another agency as a social tool for meeting a detached part of a situation rather than as a colleague in a shared process.

Case workers realize an "integrative" responsibility most easily when material relief is to be raised from several sources. An individual or agency that is being asked by another organization to contribute money or its equivalent—e g., special diet—will require a clear defining of the need-situation and will expect to be kept informed of all important changes. In the last part of History A the Family Society made itself responsible for maintaining such an interchange of information. Had the patient been obliged to enter the hospital again, they would at once have notified both relatives and agencies, or had any of the cooperating donors been obliged to withdraw, they would have secured the sum involved elsewhere or have furthered some other suitable arrangement in consultation with all concerned.

The correlating of resources for other help than that of material relief is likely to be a less clean-cut, a more tentative process. Where two or more organizations give services of such various sorts as child-placing or protecting, medical-social or family guidance, school and home visiting, and so on, there are likely to be points where their interest, and hence their activities, may overlap. Since all such societies are dealing with one aspect or another of need-situations involving family life—with "generic case work"—the division of function between them is primarily one of convenient and effective administration, and as applied to individual instances, one of stress. Medical-social service departments, including the psychiatric, have cases in which a lack of work or of proper housing appears, and family societies have many cases where sickness

or near-pathological behavior calls for guidance. Children's agencies regard foster-home placement as their special function, yet maternity homes place babies, and even a court probation officer has been known to develop quite a placing-out department for the infants of unmarried mothers who brought suit for support from alleged fathers. Again, leaders in child-placing work feel that their agencies ought to be doing more toward bettering family life in the homes from which their children come. As any case-work agency makes the scope and content of its unit of thinking that of the need-situation, its staff members can easily find themselves stretching the functions of their own organization from time to time to include aspects of need that come equally within the charter purposes of a different branch of case work. This brings us to the question which must be discussed in the following section: namely, what are case workers doing *to* their community resources by their methods of working *with* them?

THE WORKER'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD HER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

If social work in the modern city gains immensely by the fact that its agencies, taken all together, form an orchestrated system with a total performance that affords *dependable blends of diverse service*, then it becomes important that the pieces in this orchestra should keep mutually aware of their distinctive identities. Each agency, that is, should preserve enough stability in its purposes and functions for every other agency to know what its cooperation can be depended on to mean. For example, an agency which conducted work-rooms where handicapped persons

secured special retraining and vocational placement was depended on by various agencies to afford this service to married women under various sorts of disability. As time went on the retraining measures in this agency increasingly stressed the emotional adjustments which could be effected for cases with psychopathic complications. These cases swelled the agency's psychiatric services, with the result that they preempted the time and money that had been going to the married women. No deliberate change of intake policy was here intended, and no overt recognition of the change was made until other agencies had spent many unavailing efforts to secure the special help they had formerly been getting. Evidently the work of all thus suffers when there is unrecognized change on the part of one.

The problem here is that of sustaining between assorted resources the living network of interdependent and complementary activities which modern case work means to be. The measure of continuity and consistency in service which all the collaborators desire of each is not to be construed as a desire for fixity. Agencies inevitably undergo changes with changing conditions, and should upon occasion modify and alter (whether forthwith or gradually) their specific practices and even their policies and purposes. What is undesirable is *unwitting* change—the changes that arise from inattention to the consequences of what one is doing. It may be the inattention of directors and supervisors, engrossed in their agency concerns, or the inattention of case workers, engrossed in their clients' difficulties. In either case what happens is a *cumulative trend* in decision-making such that *de facto* alterations of purpose and work come about—

sometimes wrought into one's own agency and sometimes induced in one's fellow-agencies—and that alterations of function by such mere *opportunist drift* tend to defeat inter-agency expectations and to impair the *ensemble* of the community resources.

Not all the features of need-cases in terms of which an agency defines its purpose and work are such as make for variable decisions. Some are clear-cut and appear as identical in recurring sorts of need-situation. For example, the sex and civic condition of persons eligible for help from a Widow's Aid Society does not vary. No one woman to be helped is more female or more widowed than the next. The same holds true of church members aided by a denominational society. Communicants may differ as to their degree of devoutness, but not as to *degree* of membership. The function of such agencies—expressed in their daily decisions accepting this or that case for care—would therefore be clearly defined as to these special aspects of need-situations. A little less clear-cut, perhaps, would be the element of nationality as among persons eligible for assistance from, say, a Swedish, Italian, or British Relief Society. Those to be aided might be of "hyphenated" birth. But in contrast to these relatively discrete and unambiguous features are such variables in need-situations as those we have discussed in the preceding pages; namely the time-demand of the case, the requirement of pressure, the ability of clients to make payments, and their social status. When workers make their case decisions stress choices in terms of these features, they are giving daily impulsions to one or another *trend* in the policies and social function of their own or of other agencies.

1. How Case Decisions Influence Agency Trends

In the nature of things a worker must venture judgments as to the time-demand of a case in deciding which institution is to be approached for help with it. She knows that in situations involving acute illness—illness which is severe yet, comparatively speaking, not likely to be prolonged—a general hospital expects to meet the need, whereas in those involving chronic or incurable ailments, a chronic hospital, a private Home, or an Almshouse infirmary is the appropriate resource. The division of function between the two types of institution, however, allows of exceptions, since under certain conditions the general hospital might receive a chronic patient. Persons whose illness could be relieved, though not cured, the “semi-chronic” for instance, or the chronic with an acute flare-up, might receive care sometimes from the one and sometimes from the other sort of institution. This means that case workers who from time to time urge upon the admitting authorities the needs of this and that patient, are right along influencing judgments which in their totality determine its function in the community. A general hospital that accepted more than a small proportion of chronic cases would gradually fill its beds with the latter type of patient and thereby change into an institution for chronics.

In situations involving economic need there is again the question which organization shall assume the *indeterminate* burden of cases where mental, physical, or other handicaps make any real betterments unlikely. If it falls to the tax-supported departments to underwrite, as it were, the relief of hunger, cold, and incapacitating illness with poverty, the privately financed agencies are thereby en-

abled to select special types of need-situation for their attention without a risk of leaving needy persons to suffer. In a city where there is well-administered public relief, a family welfare society may the more readily direct its attention to situations of one or another special type, with a view to developing improved methods.⁶ On the other hand, the daily decisions between case workers by which *continuing* relief-work is pressed upon the government agencies will *tend* (whether desirably or undesirably) to make the public function one of palliating chronic distress rather than that of helping people recover an effective self-direction.

Case decisions in dealings with a-social or anti-social behavior-situations affect the function of any agency for children in the measure that they stress or lessen features of restriction and pressure in its characteristic methods of help. The degrees of restriction and pressure which we have noted as marking *types* of agency are not clear-cut and fixed. A private children's Home may offer its pupils nearly as delimited a cultural setting and bring as severe pressure to bear upon them as many a reformatory, while the latter institutions may vary considerably in the choices open to inmates and in the degree to which their authorities rely upon force. A family welfare or child-placing society may, even within a child's own home, exercise a very considerable degree of pressure, either by giving or withholding some form of aid, or by urging advice that is backed by their institutional prestige. Here the daily practices of the case worker influence the *kind of function* to be ex-

⁶ The program outlined by the American Association of Family Welfare Societies, suggesting a gradual specializing by local societies in cases where disturbed family relations may be re-directed, would afford an example.

pected from *her own* agency. She also influences the tenor of practice in other agencies. According to the type of behavior problem to which she asks this or that organization cooperatively to adapt itself she will tend to confirm or modify the respective methods of these outside resources. For example, the more delinquent are the girls which a court, through its probation officer, asks a child-placing society to put into foster homes, the more characteristic is likely to become the potential coercion which that society represents.

It is perhaps the feature of social level or social congeniality in clients that most subtly occasions the case decisions which give to agency policies their preferential slants. A really disinterested reshaping of need-situations calls for sympathetic insights, of course, into the circumstances and attitudes of unappealing and appealing persons alike. Yet where one client is attractive by virtue of status-associations or special qualities, the worker easily develops an over-personal and client-circumscribed way of thinking about the problem, and may become unmindful of the consequences for agency policy of steps that she would like to see taken. For instance, a worker in a private agency which was cooperating in the care of a "mothers' pension" family, urged that the public department should make an exception in its well-established policy of reducing a family allowance as one child after another reached earning age. The client immediately in question was a sixteen-year-old girl of only average abilities, but whose nice manners and good behavior the worker stressed. The fact that many girls, more gifted than this one, from self-supporting families, have to start work early, she dismissed as being none of her or her agency's affair. Her sole responsibility,

she felt, was to get for the nice girl she knew a chance to prepare for better-paying work. Agencies could multiply such illustrations. This all means that when clients show an especial appealingness we have present one condition that makes for those modifying of policy that take place through an interested worker's case decisions.

2. The Recognizing of Case-Made Policies

It is evident from the foregoing that changes of policy and practice take place in any agency in two ways: either as a deliberate adaptation to recognized social or economic drift on the part of administrative officials, or as the almost imperceptible relaxing or tightening of policies on the part of staff workers, now here and now there. In either event, any change of policy means a modifying of function, and change in the function of one organization influences, to some degree, the policies—or community purpose—of every other organization in that locality that is doing work in the same or in a closely related field. When the management of one agency consciously re-directs the course of its work so as to stress the meeting of some given need-aspect, other agencies gradually receive fewer cases characterized by this aspect, and vice versa. For instance, if a medical-social service department decides to try the experiment of raising a small relief fund for use in its own cases, the boards of the family welfare society and the public and private relief agencies in that city may, if the experiment holds, reserve their own relief funds for the help of situations in which sickness is not the outstanding factor; or, if a child-placing society decides that it will stress the care of problem-children from the court, some other society may find that it must extend its offices to look out for more

pre-delinquent children than before, or even for infants.

Such overt change is part of a planned program. The common notion is that all policies come into being in this way, and that their shaping and re-shaping is a major rôle of a Board of Directors. In case-work agencies, as we have seen, this is only partially true. The boards of these societies determine broad and clean-cut policies like that of adding a relief fund or of helping or not helping persons of a given sex, civic condition, religious creed, nationality—any clearly defined major changes of purpose within a charter. *Trends* in policy, however, develop out of the daily decisions of the staff workers in continuous contact with the need-situations. Their special interest in certain types of case, their choice of institutional resources to turn to, their pressure for exceptions to rules in order to help this special family or that child, and the sort of responses shown by their colleagues in these other organizations, all tend toward shifts in the social interests that get institutional expression. It is important for good community thinking in social work that all parties to this social process should recognize that we have case-made policy in philanthropy just as we have "judge-made law" in the courts. The following instances illustrate ways in which this recognition may come about.

(1) The board of a public child-welfare department met with the department head and with the staff worker in charge of placed-out feeble-minded children, to discuss their care of this handicapped group. Because the institutions for this purpose were crowded, the department was obliged to receive and place out a considerable number of such children, and the staff worker had made an informal survey of their progress in foster homes. The general pol-

icy of the department had been that, in order to preserve a family atmosphere, no more than two children other than brothers and sisters should be in the same home. But in the course of their efforts to locate good homes for these handicapped children, the department workers found that only a limited number of foster mothers were at once willing to take them, and successful in such a special responsibility. A worker, then, under pressure to place her difficult charge, would make an exception to the rule and add a third child to the two already with a successful foster mother, and, these three prospering, would later on add a fourth child and so on, until gradually, with no one's having planned it, a number of foster homes had eight to eleven feeble-minded children, all in good health and contentedly busy with farm or household chores and with play among themselves. So slowly had this all come about that it took the little survey and its discussion by board and staff with their questions and answers to open the eyes of all concerned to the fact that they were actually developing a special type of foster home for this special group of children.

(2) At a staff meeting of a private child-placing agency, discussion arose as to what the workers had learned from their unsuccessful and expensive labors with a boy they had placed out at the request of a Child Guidance Clinic. Having done well under foster care for several years, he at once dropped back to unwholesome forms of behavior on being returned home. The reason was that his mother, though uncommittable, was markedly other-than-normal in her social attitudes. Some staff members urged at first that this experience could teach nothing, because "every case is so individual" that what is true in one instance does

not apply in another. Then it came out that two new cases were under consideration (this time at the request of medico-social service departments) in each of which one parent could be described in much the same way as the mother under discussion, and that the workers who were looking into these applications were greatly torn as to whether, with this recent ill-success in mind, they should recommend that the society assume responsibility for the latter children. As the discussion dwelt on the parallels of cause-and-effect, the workers became surprised to recognize how far their judgment was being affected by the unfavorable outcome of the first case. They were letting their *learnings* from it dictate a decision that would affect their agency's "intake" policy, namely, to debar from or to receive for care children with a discouraging type of psychosocial background.

(3) In a certain community a training school for the rehabilitating of young offenders was established. This, of course, was an institution which gave its inmates a closely supervised regimen of life. Somewhat later there was instituted in this community a probation service, which allowed the young offenders to be supervised in their own homes, or in foster homes. Naturally the juvenile court tended to use probation for the less serious misdemeanants. Probation officers, and social workers who knew the children and their homes, would bring to the court's notice facts indicating that this or that child would respond to the less coercive treatment, and the judge would therefore try out the milder measure first. In the course of a few years, without anyone's planning, it developed that this institution had become one for the more confirmed and less intelligent delinquents, and that the training it offered had

necessarily been keyed down to the level of poorly endowed learners. While the public department in charge had sensed some change, it was only after they had made an informal psychiatric study of the body of inmates that they appreciated the extent to which the original purpose of the institution had been modified. This drift may have been beneficent, but had it been undesirable, the knowledge came too late for ready use, since the attitude of the court had become established.

Any decision, then, which a case worker makes in handling a given case tends either to establish or to modify some organizational attitude, habit, or policy. For a policy is nothing more than a usual way of meeting typical situations, a way to which we have given conscious thought and approval. Conscious policies, however, may (as we have seen) undergo changes in trend that lie, as it were, in an agency "pre-conscious." Whether these shifts are desirable or mistaken, an agency needs to keep aware of departures from the usual in its methods—i. e., to maintain self-knowledge—so as to reflect upon their social significance and make sure of their wisdom.

In the first instance above, the agency administrators became aware of policy departures through an informal survey, followed by a staff-and-board discussion; in the second through staff discussion alone; and in the third again through an agency self-survey. The initial step probably sprang from some groping sense, on the part of supervisor or executive, of a change in the practice by which case workers, and in the last instance the court, were tending to meet some given type of situation. The recorded further steps suggest that board members, if they discuss

the policy trends of their agency with some participation by staff members whose daily case decisions are so formative of policy, will shape their agency's function in the ways most accordant with the community's needs and with the best use of the community resources.

3. *Conferring for Inter-Agency Cooperation*

The previous discussion indicates that while in some respects the boundaries between case-work agencies may be clearly charted out, in other respects they are definable only as presumptions, tendencies, or stresses. Since any one aspect of situations centering about family life—whether of health, education, physical surroundings, conditions of employment, personal attitudes—is causally interactive with every other aspect, thorough case work seems likely to make agency divisions in this field grow less rather than more distinct. Yet this need not lead to confusion. Case workers from different organizations may learn to correlate services as efficiently as to pool funds. Even though in many instances this would be most effectively done by someone among them “assuming a major responsibility” for keeping the whole smooth-running, all should share whatever in the experience of each throws light on the continuous re-shaping of the joint need-situation. For the better assisting of their clients, they should *think together*, and should conceive their “cases” as a joint responsibility.

This, however, does not happen merely by calling upon people to “cooperate.” Most of us have to *learn* how to make use of each other's points of view. Executives, board and staff can probably best further their own growth in imaginative outlook by conferrings with representatives

of other agencies about concrete situations,⁷ whether of case work, of group work, of civic enterprise, or of all together. Those who conduct these interchanges of experience and ideas must, in order to make them effective, plan beforehand so that (a) the varying points of view of different societies with their policy attitudes get adequately expressed, and (b) the problems at issue come to be seen and felt in their joint aspects. The planned agenda should aim to help conferees to move out from the habit limits of their immediately practical tasks. The administrators and staff of any one agency are, of course, concerned first to meet well what they think of as their own special obligations. Their attention is demanded for keeping up or increasing their funds, for maintaining a well-equipped personnel, for making sure that the day-by-day work keeps up to a high standard. The urgency of these duties, however, may easily so engross their loyalties and their thoughts that they make their decisions at an agency-centered level. This is the line of least resistance. Only as *conferees* can each come to see and *feel* the purposes of his own agency defined by its relation to the whole body of institutionalized interests in the city or state will social work become expressive of sound community thinking.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

- i. Take a map of your community and fill out upon it the following items of social information:
 - (a) The sections of its area occupied respectively by retail stores, manufacturing plants and yards, residences of prosperous families, working-class neighborhoods (including any *racial* demarcations);

⁷ Alla A. Libbey and Ida R. Parker, "Case Conference—An Inter-agency Tool," *The Family*, May, 1934.

- (b) The offices of social service organizations of the kinds listed on page 210 f.
2. What duplications and what gaps does this map suggest in the range of community agencies to be desired?
 3. In appealing to donors, which of the following kinds of service would you most easily get them to respond to as important?—
 - (a) Relief in extreme need and emergency service in sickness;
 - (b) Preventive measures bearing on health and recreation;
 - (c) Emotional adjustments and "character problems";
 - (d) Re-education in social standards.

If a private agency, more readily than a tax-supported one, can shape its service-programs with experimental or other aims that only enlightened donors will appreciate, then would you expect it to lose some of its freedom of initiative when it gets its financing through a chest with community-wide "drives"?⁸

4. Since the Public Welfare Officials have tax-supplied resources for *relief*-giving, how far should private agencies devote their resources to *service*-giving, aiming to co-operate with the public agency in need situations requiring both material aid and intensive skilled service? The following paragraph from the yearly report of a Family Welfare Society shows how that agency answered this question:

"In addition to our regular work with families in special difficulties, we have extended aid to those whose need is largely financial, but is beyond the scope of the public assistance given by the Welfare Officials: such, for instance, as families with serious health problems to whom they cannot properly give more than the standard allowance; families who for one reason or another are ineligible for public aid, often because they have an equity in property;

⁸ Linton B. Swift, in *New Alignments between Public and Private Agencies*, speaks of this mass-appeal as giving the private agencies a quasi-public character.

wage earners who have a promise of employment within a reasonable time, or who are employed only on part time and who are earning too little for the support of themselves and their dependents; and single women . . . for whom help is needed in addition to the limited amount which the city can give. Then also there are the old people who are not eligible for old age assistance. We have also helped many of the so-called 'white collar' families whose adjustment to a radically lowered standard of living has presented many difficulties."

5. What points for discussion in an inter-agency conference can you make out in each of the following instances?

- (a) A child-placing agency, by intensive work on a limited number of cases, won high repute in the community for its standards of care. The local probation officer, however, complained bitterly because it would not take more of his cases.
- (b) A district nurse, being challenged for her persistence in "shopping around" among the private agencies and in ignoring the public agencies, replied: "We want to get the best we can for our children. That is our duty as social workers, is it not?"
- (c) An agency, having applied to an institution with a view to securing care for a little girl whose mother was a prostitute, received the following letter from the superintendent:

"In reply to your letter of November 25th, I beg to say that I do not think we can accept the little girl you speak of. The Board will not receive any illegitimate children, especially those whose mothers are like the mother of A. It is hard on the child, and I sympathize with her condition, but this Home was founded to care for the children of really worthy respectable people in distress, the very class that would be otherwise overlooked because of their reluctance in making their condition known. Such people as this mother are not in this class, and simply dump their offspring on any agency that will relieve them of care."

CHAPTER IX

THE SCIENTIFIC TREND IN SOCIAL CASE WORK

For many years social case work has been moving toward a professional level of thinking and practice. In making such a statement one should perhaps mention the criteria by which one differentiates between a profession and a skilled service or craft. Why does one call a stone mason a craftsman and a construction engineer a professional man? The former has a considerable practical knowledge of the properties of different kinds of stone, and a trained technique for manipulating stone in the processes of construction. But he does not have the engineer's *scientific* knowledge of the properties of building materials. The latter has also his own technical skills of computation, draughtsmanship, etc. He has in addition a theoretical command of the principles of physics by which he can assume responsibility for the *soundness* of construction as to loads, strains, resistances, etc.; and he is *ethically* responsible to his fellow-engineers for maintaining (under competitive conditions) certain standards of safety and durability in construction materials and design. The professional man, therefore, stands above the craftsman by virtue of meeting *three* requirements of which the former, at most, meets but two:

- (1) He has a distinctive set of technical skills.
(The craftsman, too, has skills that must be acquired by special technical training.)

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- (2) He owns allegiance to a code of service, with standards of practice that are maintained by an association of colleagues.
(The craftsman has standards of good workmanship, but they are more individually maintained, and less expressive of a consciously assumed responsibility to the public.)
- (3) He keeps himself in touch with the science (or sciences) out of which springs the special knowledge to be applied in his services, and expects his own work both to be tested by, and to be contributory to, the findings of scientists.

We may proceed to observe in what measure social case work meets these requirements of professional standing.

WHERE THE PROFESSIONAL TREND APPEARS

Thus far the interest of case workers has been especially keen on the improving of their methods of work. Preoccupied as they are with need-situations that are often urgent, they feel themselves less under the scientific impulses to systematize their observations and to generalize on their results and more under the practical impulses to better their judgment and their specific skills in meeting the varied needs of individuals or of families as these press daily upon their attention. Yet they increasingly desire the public to recognize that their skills are *distinctive*, springing from special qualifications that must be sought through appropriate training and experience. In earlier years (and sometimes today) it was not easy to get this claim to *distinctiveness* in the case worker's skills widely appreciated. Her working methods and procedures represented in large measure the dictates of common sense and mother wit. As time has passed, however, these methods have been tested,

improved upon, and enriched by one thoughtful colleague after another, and have then been given systematic expression that makes them an accredited "technique" at the level of teachable "principles."

With the individual-centered view of case work that prevails, "technique" is thought of as including (1) methods of getting at and interpreting those facts which indicate the nature of a client's difficulty, and (2) methods of utilizing the resources at command, both personal and institutional, so as to help the client to become self-directing. The two processes have sometimes been distinguished as "diagnosis" and "treatment." In practice they merge into each other, since steps of treatment necessarily begin with the first contact between the agency and the client, and continue throughout their mutual dealings to add to the worker-client understanding of the needs involved.

With a more "situation-minded" approach to case work, "technique" will be increasingly thought of as comprising (1) a cooperative defining of each given need-situation—not merely of one client's need—in the light of implicit socializing purposes, and (2) the changing, modifying, or realigning of its elements so as to re-direct its course toward a stage of relationships that is more ongoing in growth-fulfilments among the persons and circumstances involved. Here the term "diagnosis" is not so helpful, because with its medical associations it suggests the individual-centered conception of need, and understresses the flux in a field that is both mobile and complex. Moreover it implies a process in which the worker alone is active while the other parties to the situation are passive, whereas from the very first contacts with the case the agency is aiming to help all the persons concerned toward a cooper-

ative "diagnosing" and "treating" of their own self-environment. "Treatment" begins with the joint effort of worker, client, and others to see the situation in its full social possibilities.

Whichever of these two modes of thought the worker assumes, her steps of procedure will be outwardly much the same. In either case she will have a "first interview" with the spokesman for the manifest need—the wife, the husband, the unadjusted adolescent, the homeless old person; she will turn to the same outside sources for revealing points of view and for cooperation; she will bend her inquiries and efforts at help in the same general directions of health, employment, and so on. But where she conceives her case as "client-centered" she will deal with it in ways that suggest clinical techniques, and where she conceives it as "situation-centered" she will seek shared insights and maturing relationships in ways that suggest educational techniques. Of course the advances in skills that social agencies refer to as their techniques are not methods that have become *prescriptions*. They are methodological *presumptions*. For instance, there is a presumption that careful inquiry should precede measures of assistance; that a client's nearest relatives, if closely involved in a need-situation, should be drawn into consultation early; that if a man is out of work his past employers should be seen or heard from; that a family which has been assisted by one relief agency should remain under its oversight rather than be transferred to that of another; that where several agencies are cooperating on the same need-situation, the agency that has assumed a major responsibility for guidance should be the one to maintain close personal contact with the client, and so on. Yet any of these presumptions

may be set aside for good reason. The essential skills of the trained worker are expressive of *principles* arising both from reflection upon agency experience and from the findings of psycho-social science. Within the last decade these skills have become reflective of insights from psychiatry, which have replaced simple moralistic explanations of behavior by a more sensitive understanding of psychological mechanisms involved in personal and social relationships, especially those of the family group and those between worker and client. This is refining and adding flexibility to technique processes, and gives promise of an increasingly rich intellectual content in social work.

The second criterion of a profession, a code of service, is being consciously developed by and among the membership of the American Association of Social Workers, a nation-wide organization with local chapters. The hope is that higher standards of service, which include a standard educational background for agency staffs, will in time recommend themselves for all social work, and not characterize the more progressive agencies alone. Another distinctive feature of this developing code is likely to be a formulation of approved procedures and relationships between the agencies that become "teamed up" in the course of cases in which multiple services are required.¹

The third criterion of a profession, that the worker keeps himself in touch with the science (or sciences) out of which springs the special knowledge to be applied in his services, and expects his own work both to be tested by,

¹ See "Case Conference—an Interagency Tool" (*The Family*, May, 1934) by Alla A. Libbey and Ida R. Parker, who have conducted valuable researches in the field of conjoint responsibilities between agencies.

and to be contributory to, the findings of scientists, has naturally been the slowest to assert itself in social case work. The reason for this—at least in part—is the recency of the more fruitful developments in psychopathology, educational and social psychology, and sociology—all ranking as “young” sciences, with much that is so tentative and merely exploratory in their findings that social work can use these but sparingly. At present case workers are tending to assimilate into their own thinking a number of ideas from psychopathology: the ideas of “emotional drive,” “complex,” “dissociation,” “conflict,” “identification,” “transference,” and others. These concepts, growing as they do out of the practice of physicians with patients, often formulate what appear to be the motivations that spring out of people’s family relations. Since the case worker, whether in a family, a children’s, or a medical agency, has a constant concern with the behavior and attitudes among or between parents and children, brothers and sisters, man and wife, she finds such concepts practically helpful in guiding her observation. They make her more sensitive to the possible meanings of unadjustment symptoms, more aware of the influence of her own attitudes on clients, and more fertile in clues to the readjustment of family situations.² One reason why these concepts are perhaps only too congenial to the average case worker is that, having as their factual basis—the field of observation back of them—the behavior and the inner life of individual patients, they are characteristically client-centered.

² Grace F. Marcus, *Some Aspects of Relief in Family Case Work*, p. 96. “Since psychiatric understanding and treatment are based on study of the family relationships of the individual, there is a natural direct kinship between psychiatric premises and those that have inspired and sustained the development of family case work.”

However they may *presuppose* relationships, they *stress* the inner life of the individual. While the psychiatrist may get a grasp of the situation from the patient's own story, his treatment and his thinking, like that of any doctor, *qua doctor*, are mainly concerned with the person who is the acute center of a maladjustment rather than with the whole maladjusted situation. The range or scope of knowledge and thought to which they are applicable and for which they are useful, the view of "personality" they assume, is therefore that with which the client-centered worker is at home.

Since many problems in case work involve the education or reeducation of people in their habits, interests, and outlook, we can expect case workers increasingly to recognize psychology as contributory to the scientific basis of their practice. We have already noted (p. 66 f. and footnote) the bearing upon a case situation of certain concepts from *educational* psychology—namely those of "attendant learnings" and "intrinsic" (as vs. "extrinsic") incentives. Other ideas—for example those of "behavior pattern," "attitude," "value," "status," "interstimulation," "socialization"—are receiving special development in *social* psychology. Thus E. S. Bogardus gives definite social implications to the terms italicized in the following statements (from *Contemporary Sociology, passim*): "The actual *attitude* [which a man shows] always represents an effort on the part of the individual to get some sort of recognition in the group organization. Life organization demands membership in a group, and the attitudes are the expression of a desire for *status*." . . . "Not only are culture patterns and *behavior patterns* complementary, but also culture pat-

terns and social values coincide. An attitude can be understood only in terms of a *value* (culture pattern)" . . . "It seems safest and wisest to approach *leadership* as a relationship and to study leadership situations rather than leaders." It is the belief of the present writer that case workers can expect further enrichments for "situational thinking" from the "Gestalt" school of psychology. For example, Kurt Lewin, in *A Dynamic Theory of Personality*, gives quite distinctive and suggestive versions of such basic ideas as "person" (viewed as a composite of "tense systems"), "environment" (as displaying "valences" of which the kinds, strengths and distribution are important for the "field forces"), "insight" (as effecting a reorganization of the perceived field).

From sociology, as the science of social processes or of man's associated life, we should expect case work to derive a large measure of its basic understandings. The gains which the social worker can draw from this science have been well stated by R. M. MacIver as follows:

"He can gain an orientation to his task, a greater comprehension of social potentialities, a broader knowledge of social conditions which extend far beyond the immediate case or the near group or the institution while penetrating within it, and thus some safeguard against illusive hopes and immature enthusiasms. . . . In the second place, he can gain more specific aid from the studies (in delinquency, family disorganization, child labor, recreation, etc.) made in the field of his own interest."³

At present, it must be admitted, the case worker seems

³ R. M. MacIver, *The Contribution of Sociology to Social Work* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1931).

to make but meagre use of sociological conceptions. The reason may be ventured that these concepts have been framed out of surveys of social phenomena too broadly viewed to yield tools for close-up case thinking. Whereas psychiatric concepts are descriptive mainly of experience as it takes place within the individual, those offered by sociology describe experience mainly as viewed in a far-flung "total" or cultural situation (See p. 97). For the former science the field of observed facts out of which concepts arise is narrower than that of the case worker's operative unit—i. e., the need-situation; for the latter it is immensely wider. Such concepts as "societary process," "cultural lag," "population mobility" evidently reflect a concern with large human "*plurels*." Other concepts, such as "primary groups," "socialization," "social distance," although potentially fruitful, are now little more than faintly stimulating to a worker preoccupied with the needs of a half-skilled Italian-born man, an American-born wife, and several undernourished children. They do not sensitize her observation in a specific enough way. The idea of "social distance," which offhand might seem applicable within the family, does little more than cover differences in the man's or the woman's attitudes toward a favorite and a less-loved child, in the husband's feeling of closeness to his own blood kin and to his wife, and in the wife's sense of aloneness, perhaps, in an Italian-born neighborhood, and so on. In order that this broad idea shall help to sharpen the insight and organize the thought of case workers, it must be broken down into sub-concepts standing for more clearly defined attitude-value patterns recognizable in need-situations that involve different specific sources and consequences of "social distance."

HOW SOCIAL WORK MAY CONTRIBUTE TO
SOCIAL SCIENCE

Just as the work of a practicing doctor and of a psychiatrist can and should be contributory to the sciences respectively of physiology and of psychopathology, so can that of the case worker be contributory to social science. But in order to see *how* the worker can make her experience contribute appropriately and effectively to studies which require the methodology of the scientific specialist, we must first recognize certain peculiar difficulties that attend the progress of science in the *social* field.

Any science seeks to formulate an account of some distinctive field of phenomena—an account that makes the phenomena intelligible in terms of their relations to a system of their own. Intelligibility is achieved (1) when the distinctive aspects, items, features, relationships composing the field have been clearly identified and named, and (2) when their concurrences and sequences become statable as “laws” (or at least as dependable presumptions), so that the scientist can think about them in terms of “causation.” The sciences that achieve this intelligibility with the greatest success are the natural sciences—e. g., physics and chemistry—which are therefore commonly viewed as displaying the “ideals” of method for all other sciences. In the social field, however, we have two features of phenomena that block our efforts to be “ideally” scientific. One is the pervasive presence, in social situations, of such items as felt values, dispositions, and wishes—of elements that are *subjective*; the other is the multiplicity of items which are simultaneously and interdependently operative in any one situation—making its “causation” something

very *complex*. Each of these features dictates considerations as to what will prove *profitable* in social studies—for it is possible to be at once impeccably “scientific” and sterile.

The subjective character of any item makes it less possible to be described with that precision which science requires in presenting a problem of causation. If we are told that a certain behavior appears when a person is “uncomfortably warm,” we are not being told enough to know *how* warm he is feeling. Natural science gets this precision by putting its descriptions into *quantitative* terms, as by describing warmth in terms of degrees registered upon a thermometer. A person’s *feelings* of warmth are not thus describable, and when we turn to *emotions* of special quality and intensity, we are unhappily just as vague. There is no anger-scale by which we can say how hot is a given sort of “heated rejoinder.” This means that although, in describing social phenomena, we may use such terms as “force” in speaking of an emotional “drive,” or of the “appeal” of a value, or of conflicting purposes (or of other such items discussed in articles in the excellent journal of *Social Forces*), we cannot make distinctions about our “forces” that enable us to say such things as the physicist says about his “force”; viz., that its direction (when a given body is acted on) is in that of the acceleration of the center of mass of the body, and that its magnitude is the product of the acceleration and the mass of the body. In short, since we cannot put our social fact-items into quantitative terms, we cannot formulate “laws” about them which have the explanatory efficacy of physical laws.

The complexity of social causation has been well stated by Professor MacIver in a passage enumerating four

aspects as simultaneously presented by every situation. There is first the broad background of social and economic factors; e. g., of inadequate wage rates, competitive modes of living, racial or class prejudices, business depression. There is next the immediate background of the group that is under study—its accepted standards and modes of living, its “invisible environment” of community-sanctioned mores. Third, there is “the play of personalities within the specific group . . . where the problem of maladjustment occurs.” Here are to be noted the recurrently developing needs of readjustment in attitude and relationship with the inevitable changes wrought by time. Finally there are the “immediate precipitants” of unadjustment or crisis—those presenting the clash, thwart or breakdown that *occasion* a social concern.⁴ Evidently the investigator of causes has here a problem far less simple than those (for example, Pasteur’s with the cause of silk-worm blight) which in the natural sciences have yielded such rich successes.

With these special difficulties besetting any effort to deal scientifically with social experience, we face questions as to alternatives of approach to social studies. One kind of approach is suggested by the actual understandings of a whole case situation that are achieved by a well-informed, observant, and reflective worker who simply associates herself with the client group, sharing their experiences and sensing the interplay of influences and responses which complicate the whole group process. For example, a scientifically minded worker, devoting herself as did the worker in Case C—that of the Snyder family, pp. 33 ff.—to a

⁴ R. M. MacIver, *The Contribution of Sociology to Social Work*, pp. 93-97.

close and continuous participation in the interlocking problems of health, work, income, morale, would simply "take in" the characteristic multiple causation of the family processes by her apperceptive exposure to all that was simultaneously happening. To speak in terms of Professor MacIver's "four aspects," she would recognize two basic factors in the case as a part of the broad economic background of American industrial life: the socially wasteful and personally discouraging process of trial-and-error in vocation-finding—instanced by Snyder's efforts to be a business man when he lacked the most elementary business qualifications; and the economic non-fit in town life of a semi-skilled factory hand with a large family—where the meagre industrial earning-power of the group needs supplementing by agricultural food-products which in a country setting can be grown in a family garden. As immediate background in this group the worker would view as operative factors the economic resources of the community—the City Woodyard, the Street Department, the Sewing Society—and economic alternatives in a more rural setting; also the health resources available in Dispensary, Public Hospital, Board of Health, Outing Association; also the mores that were figuring in the behavior of this group—in the man's responses springing from injured dignity in his rôle of an inadequate breadwinner, in the woman's dutiful acquiescence in all the marital and parental demands upon her, in the worker's own acceptance of current community opinion which estopped social agencies from giving birth-control information. As the "play of personalities" here she would recognize as meaningful the man's difficulty in getting on with fellow-employees, his readiness to quit his job, his talk

of leaving home, his drinking and addiction to get-rich-quick reading; also the woman's tendency to be too house bound for the good of her own relations to husband and children. As "precipitants of crisis" the worker would view the developments of acute need for the attentions of her agency—occasioning the immediate definition of the case as a need-situation. All this, of course, is but rough summary of the interactive elements, of the multiple web of responses and circumstances, which, entering the mind of one who is attentive as a "participant-observer,"⁵ would develop her sense of the whole and her insight into its constitutive processes.

This approach to the study of social processes by "participant-observing," with the student immersed in the social situation and responsive to its whole flowing web of causal interplay, can yield an insight for which *some* scientific validity may be claimed. It can do justice to the full complexity of the matter—to its peculiar character as a whole in relation to which the constitutive items and partial aspects must, for their right understanding, be cognized together. As scientific understanding, however, it is seriously limited in two respects: (1) It uses but little help from *systematizing* concepts which *facilitate* the insightful sense of the whole, so that its achievement is time-consuming. (2) It abides as an understanding of the whole situation-phenomenon *stressed as something unique*, so that the student passes on to investigate other situations with but little carry-over of conscious implementation from her experience with this one.

⁵ The idea and the technique of "participant-observing" have been developed and discussed by E. C. Lindeman. See his *Social Discovery* and Hader and Lindeman's *Dynamic Social Research*.

In contrast with this intensive procedure for achieving full familiarity with one unit case of social process is the approach to social causation by a statistical procedure with many cases. The present writer once took part with a group of workers in a study of problems in the need-situations of unmarried motherhood. A natural starting-point of study was to note in a *number* of these situations one or more recurring fact-items—e. g., that of a “broken home” (a home in which one parent had died, or deserted, or was incapacitated) in conjunction with the sex delinquency which was of course a part of the “social process” under investigation. The recurring conjunction suggested that there might be *some* causal relationship, but the scientific procedure began with the explicit “hypothesis” that broken homes are an *important operative factor* in the causation of sex delinquency in girls, and with ensuing steps to establish statistically *how probable* the hypothesis can be made. Here there were available figures showing a *specific* percentage of broken homes in a *large* count of delinquency cases. The inference gained was that where so many cases of the phenomenon (sex delinquency) out of a total number differing from one another in most particulars, agreed in one feature (broken home), there was a definite *presumption of causality* in their relationship.

The merit of this statistical approach to the explanation of a given social process is that it establishes a causal relationship for one situation-item after another, *as a precisely statable presumption*, with respect to the whole phenomenon to be explained. Moreover, when two or more factors of causation have been thus established for the same social process we can *compare* their showing in the process by displaying tabular or charted *correlations* be-

tween them, thus making a modest approach to a portrayal of multiple causation. In the study of sex delinquency just referred to, one could establish operative correspondences between *several* factors: broken homes, certain types of employment, certain intelligence ratings, etc. The serious limitations of this procedure are (1) that it results only in telling us the fact or presumption of *a* causal relationship of some sort, not the distinctive nature of *the given* relationship that is present in a given case; and (2) that it makes a *piecemeal* advance toward understanding by viewing situation-items *atomistically* and moving *additively* toward a grasp of the whole, whereas a *psycho-social* whole operates as a *system* which like an organism conditions the very nature of its interdependent elements. This method of explanation, therefore, seems to belie the peculiar character of the thing to be explained.

All that is here said is not to be understood as belittling the place of statistical investigations in social science. Statistical methods have various important contributions to make not covered by the present considerations. What is here being urged is that "close-up" studies of the psycho-social processes displayed in case work are likely to be *unfruitful* unless we respect the stage of social science at which we are, and make sure that we start with working concepts that are appropriate to the peculiar experience-matter under study. The special difficulties that are presented by a social process—namely its elements of subjectivity and its complexity—may seem unduly stubborn difficulties when it is really *we* who are stubborn in persisting to think atomistically and additively about matters that must be defined dynamically. If we are willing to pursue the implications of the "situational" thinking which has

been outlined in Chapter III and illustrated in Chapter VII, we may find that such thinking not only serves the case worker's *practical* concern (dwelt on in those chapters) to be as soundly helpful as possible to people in trouble but serves a *theoretical* concern to make social work fruitfully contributory to social science. It bids for a fresh approach to the study of case-work processes by a procedure of *situation-defining*. And it begins with an effort to get the defining done in terms of concepts that are true to the distinctive features of "situational" processes; namely—

- (a) Their dynamic character—such that the elements are conditioned, even for descriptive purposes, by their interactive parts in an evolving whole;
- (b) Their great complexity—such that science requires units of thought-prehension intermediate between the whole concrete "case" and mere abstracted "factors."

Each of these aspects of a "situation-defining" procedure calls for a little further discussion.

1. *The Developing of Concepts of the "Dynamics" of Case Processes*

A fresh approach to our study by way of a procedure for redefining situations does not require us to begin by improvising brand-new ideas. We already have, both in physics and in the psychology of impulses, dispositions, and emotional "forces," ideas for various aspects and elements of a dynamic process. What is required is that we assimilate ideas that have arisen in one field of thought to answering aspects in another field of thought. The idea in each instance is not just *borrowed* as if coming ready-made from some previous thinker, and *laid down* on the

new matter. It is re-abstracted, and takes something of sea-change from the new material and the new point of view. The ideas in terms of which we can most fruitfully do our thinking about case situations hark back fairly definitely to those in terms of which John Dewey, in 1910, analyzed the "complete act of thought."⁶ His analysis recognized a dynamic element in reflective thinking in that the effort *arises* out of a *felt need* for decision, and runs a *purposive* course. The steps of this course Dewey set forth in a study making special use of the following ideas:

- (1) A *situation of felt difficulty*;
- (2) Location and *definition* of the difficulty as a *problem*;
- (3) *Suggestions* as to its possible explanation or solution;
- (4) *Testing* of suggestions by elaborating them for inspection as to their respective consistences and *consequences*;
- (5) *Corroboration* of the accepted conclusion.

It is to be noted that these ideas, as Dewey used them, were of very *general* reference to thought-process in a number of fields, but that he was using them throughout as applying to what goes on in the mind of an *individual* thinker. They have undergone a definite phase of development for *social* thinking in studies by Harrison S. Elliott, A. D. Sheffield and others of processes in group conferring. This development can be expected to gain, as the ideas are brought to bear on case work, from the reorienting of attention and expectation that appears when situations are envisaged from the Gestalt point of view. In studies by Mr. Sheffield and the present writer any *situation in which the unadjusted desires and the needs of persons are so*

⁶ See his *How We Think*, p. 6 ff. and Chapter VI. An exposition of his analysis and of its bearings in various fields is offered by Columbia Associates in Philosophy, *An Introduction to Reflective Thinking*, 1923.

interdependent that a social fulfilment for them must be sought in terms of a set of mutually conditioning relationships seems profitably conceived as a configured field. The ideas of "thought-process," here becoming more limitedly ideas of a specific course of adjustive social process, present the following designative possibilities:

(1) The *situation of felt difficulty* is an unclearly defined field of relationships involving thwarts or unsatisfied needs. Its lack of clearness is due to the fact that the persons involved see it from differing points of view, and with emotional disturbances of vision. Each person comprises in himself a variety of "tense systems"—sub-organizations of his attitudes and representing his needs. A person's apprehension of the whole field affects what he sees in the parts. The whole set of mutually conditioning relationships will move through a circuit of development, either of frustration or of fulfilment, according to the fortunes of its guidance.

(2) The *definition of the problem* involves a recognition of the kind of development appropriate to the needs. The mutually conditioning relationships present a sort of unfulfilled *pattern* susceptible of a transformation in which the attitude-systems of the interactive persons achieve a new equipoise.

(3) *Suggestions* toward solution appear as ideas offered from the points of view of the persons involved. The thinking of each gains by pooled associations of ideas out of the experience of the others. There is an outreach of thought toward alternatives of action that give a larger significance to the matters under immediate concern. There results for the group what has been called (p. 139) a "stereoscopic" picture of the situation, and a "directive suggestion" (pp.

153, 167) or perception of some principle of reorganization for the present unsatisfying field.

(4) The *testing* of suggestions takes the form of mutual inspection of the alternatives mentioned, with attention to likely consequences for the *values* that are at stake. Since this goes on in the course of conversations accompanying active efforts, it invites "circular response" (p. 167), and induces *self-criticism* and a concern with overwrought emotion and personal constraint that may be impairing people's ability to see the *inter-relatedness* of things.

(5) The *conclusion* of this process is an all-around enhancement of "insight" into the how and why of the situation, such that its relations are envisaged on a maturer level of experience. This insight issues in an integration of purposes and a changed basis of personal responses, so that people become sensitive and equably disposed toward "emergent" values in their continuing relations.

This of course is but a sketchy indication of the ways in which concepts may be developed for the more fruitful account of the inner dynamics of a given adjustment process.

2. *The Identifying of Types of Need-Situation*

We have seen that it is of the nature of need-situations as matter for study to require as the unit for mental grasp and comparison something intermediate between the whole concrete "case" and mere abstracted factors from it. If we are to study family situations in which friction between parents seems causally involved with failures of children, we should move too slowly—too mentally taxed by the uniquenesses—if we began by immersing ourselves, say, in the case of Herbert (as this would be *inclusively* worked

out on the lines sketched on page 206 f.), and then passed to a second and a third case for a similar intensive absorption. And we should move too *unfruitfully* if we began by abstracting one recurrent item in these—say, the child's chagrin at failure—for correlation and generalization. Herbert's chagrin at failure is an emotional state with peculiar overtones deriving from his rôle in a pattern of relationships projected against a social background. Other items in the situation are similarly conditioned by their place in the pattern, and since this dynamically meaningful pattern recurs in a number of situations we can use it as defining a *type* of situation and can expect to make comparisons and derive causal generalizations about the type.

It must be evident that this type-defining relational pattern is a much more complex thought-unit than the items usually taken for statistical correlations. In the family pattern just mentioned we have (as the diagram, p. 203, suggests) at least the following plurality of items:

- One parent at a cultural level which is felt as higher than that of the other ;
- A difference in the kind of attachment felt by the child toward one parent from that felt toward the other ;
- Emotional conflict in one area finding a sort of underground course for disturbance in another area ;
- Diverse understandings of the difficulty as viewed by people acting on different purposes :

The pattern of stresses subtended between these items will recur in other situations between items of the same *kinds* although differing in particulars. For example—

- The difference in cultural level which in "Herbert's case" is an educational difference may in other cases be a social or a racial difference ;

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The superior status which in this case is the mother's may in other cases be the father's;

The sex of the child and the difference in direction and kind of its attachments to mother and father may vary in other cases;

The area of emotional disturbance for the child, which in this case is the school, may in other cases be the playground, a place of work, etc.

Cases with these variations can preserve the essential pattern which identifies the *situational type* and makes them profitably comparable. A study of situations thus grouped by relational type will of course entail a concern with appropriate *nomenclature* for the types. This should be worked out with a regard not only to maximum designative adequacy for the situations within one grouping but to consistency in the schemes of designation that obtain between different groupings.⁷

It is important to emphasize here the difference between this situation-defining method of approach and that which is called the "case method." It resembles the "case method" in that its subject-matter is totals of experience with like patterns as revealed each in a number of instances (a much smaller number, of course, than that from which discrete items could be gathered and correlated); it differs from the case method in that its unit of thinking is not the "case," *as such*. This latter term applies, in social work, to a family or individual while under the consideration or care of a welfare agency. During this period the needs of thinking may organize factual data into

⁷ An early sketch for the designation of situational types in family life was offered by the present writer in a discussion of "Conditioning Patterns in the Family Circle," *Social Forces*, June, 1930. Quoted on p. 98 ff.

one need-situation—witness Histories D to K and also the illustrations in Chapter III—or they may shape a succession of functional wholes, each moving into the next—witness Histories A, B, and C. The situation is the case *as conceived at some juncture that is significant for the fortunes of the values at stake*. For instance History A, which as a case continued for nearly four years, is presented as four situations each defined by a somewhat different treatment purpose. The background data in Situation 2 is the same as for Situation 1. Changes, however, in such immediate particulars as Miss Horan's and her sister's health have put the possibility of a home and self-support for the women "out of the picture," and the problem takes on a new aspect. The same noting of meaningful change within continuity marks the steps from Situation 2 onward. Similarities of pattern and process would be sought between these delimited situations and those that might appear in the course of other case histories, and not between the unorganized summations of data usually meant by the term "cases."

The situation-defining and the quantitative methods of social study should be thought of as complementary to each other. When a student following the method here suggested uses the word "recurrence" or "type" he is looking in a quantitative direction. It is even conceivable that tested situation patterns, arising from this form of study, might in time afford more meaningful categories for a quasi-statistical treatment than do case histories at present. Students need to discriminate at what points in the pursuit of social knowledge this or that method of approach may prove most productive.

Some thought needs to be given to the working plans by which the shaping of concepts for scientific "situation-thinking" shall proceed. For it must be recognized that when need-situations are being both served and studied from the point of view here discussed, we shall have situation-thinking going on at more than one level. The lay persons of the client group are being helped, in a spirit of cooperative self-education, to see their own needs⁸ in terms of life-relationships with present thwarts and conflicts of impulse and wish, but with possibilities of a maturing course of adjustment expressive of a socializing purpose. Here is situational thinking at a common-sense level, with no talk of dynamics, or mechanisms of process or of relational patterns. Next above this level, however, is the thinking of the case workers immediately involved, who as "participant observers" have both the practical interest of helpers and (if scientifically trained) some theoretical interest in the adjustive process. Their contribution to the defining of a situation will not only bring to bear specially trained sensitivities—as where a family worker, a medical social worker, and a children's visitor, cooperating, would supplement each other's observings, each with fuller justice to aspects which the others might slight or miss. It will make them more critically aware each of her own "agency equation" as an observer, since each represents an agency with a special institutional concern which biases its worker's vision. Their thought together will bring about both the "impersonalizing" of view that the lay folk need and the *socializing of technical interest* which the specialized technician may need.

⁸ Cf. p. 156.

A still more rigorously scientific level of defining effort will be that of the academic research worker. An effective plan for this work should therefore contemplate a joint enterprise between an agency well-equipped as to the quality of its staff, and a member of an academic department of social science. The latter, in close touch with the first-hand daily experience of a seasoned staff member, should shape and lead the study. This is because a case worker, even with a light "case load," can hardly shift her mental habits so as to sustain the analytic thinking and hold the detached point of view of a social student engaged in developing a methodology. Nor is social work today near enough to a professional level to sustain a task whose "results" must be held as tentative over a probably long period.⁹ Worker and scientist should finalize on the situation-defining together, aiming to assure that the former keeps the study-content specific and concrete, while the latter, with his theoretical background, sees psycho-social implications at this or that point of the case experience, which might otherwise not figure in the interpretation to be sought. Study thus closely allied with practical work would be analogous to clinico-pathological research in the medical field, and might be as near an approach to the experimental as we can make in the field of social case work.

⁹ Dr. Mark A. May, Director Yale Institute of Human Relations, in his first annual report (Nov., 1935) suggesting the need for a prolonged training of experts in research, says, "The rate of progress toward the development of a science of human relations will be accelerated with the orientation of the traditions of scientific inquiry. New approaches must be found, better technique invented, more fruitful concepts formulated and a body of data accumulated which will make it possible at least to see more clearly the human problems presented by culture."

WHY THE PROFESSIONAL TREND MEETS
EMOTIONAL RESISTANCES

The professional trend of social work, although appearing thus far mainly in a conscious concern to make and share advances in practical skills, has had to justify itself at each step against doubts and complaints. Where the prevailing community opinion about disadvantaged people in difficulties is uncritically individualistic (as described on p. 52 f.), an agency's service is not expected to express psycho-social *problem*-attitudes toward the difficulties. In earlier days the service was viewed simply as "ministrations to the parish poor," calling mainly for kind hearts and a "human touch." At this stage of opinion, even the modest step toward *social* responsibility represented by the Charity Organization movement met with John Boyle O'Reilly's satire as charity offered in the name "of a cold, statistical Christ." Today we have the staffs of settlement houses preferring to think of themselves as "neighbors" to the underprivileged folk of their quarter, and often fearful lest their service become "over-professionalized." Case-work agencies also, with lingering slogans such as "Not alms but a friend," are somewhat consciously anxious that their problem-solving and seemingly "impersonal" approach to their clients' troubles shall not stir public misgivings that their dealings lack the warmth of confidential relationships and personal sympathy.

These fears spring from a failure to distinguish between two sorts of sympathy. The worker may sympathize with the client simply by repeating his emotional attitudes, showing grief as he grieves, and mirroring his irritations against others. Here she "feels with" the client as a condition of

understanding him, but so long as her sympathy consists of this *identifying of herself with his present states of mind*, she is accepting the client's own defining of the situation, and his mind, engrossed in immediate frustrations and unaware of the less obvious resources and possibilities, makes a definition that is partial, confused, and unsuggestive of any but crude and palliative "ways out." What he needs from the worker, and what she should be peculiarly able to give, is a sympathy that identifies *her rôle* as an agent of adjustive process with the particular relationships involved in what *he* naturally views as *his* drama of adjustment—although as they move on together both she and he will come to define the "plot" of this drama in terms of a larger personal and social significance. It is this quality in her sympathy (which the client senses even in a "first interview") which prompts his frequent remark that it "gives him courage."

One can expect, therefore, that emotional resistances to the professionalizing trend will diminish as people's ideas about sympathy become more discriminating. But there is a second source of resistance in certain intellectual limitations to which case workers are liable from the very nature of their immediate responsibilities. Their problems come before them in forms both very concrete and intensively detailed. The bodily presence of persons in distress, of doctors, teachers, fellow-workers ready to help, all stir and guide their minds toward thinking that stresses methods and practical skills; and their standard of "individualized treatment" implies the accumulating of ever more facts on which to base appropriate care. The very thoroughness with which each need—in health, in family relations, etc.

—is met, tends to keep the worker to so close-up a view of profuse particulars that she neither expects nor sees, in the situation before her, any type-patterning in it of conditions and relationships. As a Gestaltist would say, she fails to make the "figure" stand out from the "ground." That is, she fails to use clues to her present problem arising from something significantly recurrent out of her past problems. When this criticism is offered, workers tend to react defensively by insisting on the "uniqueness" of each case. They are really insisting that in their work the only *intellectual* demand of a quasi-professional sort is a requirement of the intensive, participant-observing kind (see p. 263), taking each case as a unit, and finding no articulated meanings in it that carry over to, and facilitate the interpretation of, other cases. It is a frailty of workers thus dominated by the uniqueness of their cases that their minds seem to swing between extremes: first dwelling on the immediate "wholes" of experience as imperfectly meaningful agglomerations of detail, and then seeking an intellectual compensation in far-flung generalizings based on figures about abstracted fact-items—especially when these are made the basis for reforms sought by law.

To say that case workers thus far have given but imperfect interpretative formulations of their richly valuable experience is to bring us again to the fact that they are in need of the appropriate conceptual tools for their purpose. Lacking a scientific rationale for situation-defining, they have little satisfactory guidance for shaping their multifarious data into significant order—as is evidenced by their case histories, which merely chronicle the episodic details of the client's personal fortunes. It can now be reasonably

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hoped that advances in psycho-social science are at hand that will implement them for a worthy part in converting case-work experience into systematized knowledge.

THE LEVEL OF SITUATIONAL INSIGHT AS THE LEVEL OF MAXIMUM SERVICE

In our earlier discussion of the ideal in social work of "individualizing" its services,¹⁰ so that it respects people's personal differences and addresses itself sympathetically to their distinctive needs, we remarked that case work has displayed three successive levels of individualizing. There is first a level of mere relief-giving, individualized in the sense that the amount and the kind of relief—cash, groceries, medical aid—is adapted to the particular case in hand. There is next the level of service-giving, individualized in the sense that health care, or vocational training, or recreational opportunity are variably brought in as the given client may need them. There is third a level of more intimate relationship at which individualizing takes the form of help to the client toward self-understanding and self-direction. The view of case work that has been developed in these chapters represents what may be termed a fourth level of individualizing. Its emphasis on the "situation" is only superficially an emphasis away from the person. Just as the second and third level each brought under view things of import to individuals that had been understressed at the level preceding, so this fourth level brings under view the growing fringe of each individual: the emergent life-values that are threaded upon the multiple relationships of one person with others. And since the

¹⁰ See Chapter IV, p. 118 f.

web of these relationships takes revealing patterns in characteristic situations—patterns that become still more revealing as they recur in situations otherwise differing, any agency can enrich its service to its clients in so far as it *groups* for attention cases that present type likenesses of situation. The cumulative instructiveness of its experience with cases thus grouped would make its work both enlightening to client individuals and contributory to insights needed by the whole community.

With the suggestion of some such program of experimental grouping the subject may be left here for further developments. Many thoughtful workers will find a congeniality in ways of work thus prompted by a "philosophy" that makes individual misfortunes and social error redeemable where experiences are reflectively shared. In the social spread of insights cooperatively won by worker, scientist and client group we may behold a part of what America is doing to create a worthy common culture. Surely no ampler justification can be sought for the continuance of private social agencies.

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